FREE FAMILY PASS WITH THE National Trust

WORTH UP TO £50

SEE PAGE 24
TERMS, CONDITIONS
AND EXCLUSIONS APPLY

VALID UNTIL MARCH 6

DAILY EXPRESS
CAMPAIGNING FOR A BETTER BRITAIN
express.co.uk
SATURDAY, JANUARY 10, 2026
£3

The Princess of Wales reflects on her cancer battle as she turns 44

KATE'S 'DEEPLY GRATEFUL' FOR NATURE'S HEALING POWER

BY **EMILY FERGUSON** Royal Editor

THE Princess of Wales has revealed she is “deeply grateful” to nature as her cancer recovery continues.

Catherine praised the healing power of the natural world in the

TURN TO PAGE 4

FREE £2 SHOP BET WITH William HILL VALID ON ALL SPORT

SEE PAGE 22
BET 18+ ONLY. TERMS AND
CONDITIONS APPLY

Clubcard Prices

£4.45

£4
2 Boneless Salmon Fillets

Clubcard Price

2 for
£4.50

Clubcard Price

Birds Eye
picked to frozen in 2 ½ hours
garden peas
deliciously tender
800g

Birds Eye
steam in 3 minutes
Steamfresh
hearty farmhouse mix
540g

£3.75

£3

Clubcard Price

PRONOUNCED: FA-YEH!
FAGE
Total
NATURAL FAT FREE GREEK RECIPE STRAINED YOGHURT
0% FAT
3g sugars
10.3g protein
54 kcal
per 100g
No added sugar

£4.50

£3.25

Clubcard Price

strawberry
Actimel
RICH IN VITAMIN D
with vit D & B6 for immune support
cultured shot with exclusive L. casei cultures
x12

TESCO
Every little helps

Tesco 2 Boneless Salmon Fillets 260g: Clubcard price £15.38/kg, regular price £17.12/kg, ends 27/01. Any 2 for £4.50 on selected Birds Eye frozen veg, ends 19/01. Fage Total 0%Fat Greek Recipe Yogurt 450g: Clubcard price 60p/100g, regular price 83p/100g; Actimel Strawberry Immunity Live Yoghurt Drink Multipack 12x100g: Clubcard price 27p/100g, regular price 38p/100g, ends 27/01. Available in the majority of larger stores and online. Excludes Express, Isle of Man and Whoosh. Clubcard/app required. Delivery charges and some exclusions may apply.

Pictures: CLICK NEWS AND MEDIA

Ain’t snow stopping Raye!

BY **NIKKI ONAFUYE**

IT may be bitterly cold – but the weather hasn’t stopped this little Raye of sunshine.

The BRIT-winning pop star danced in a chic red gown while filming her new video during flurries of snow as temperatures dropped to -2C.

No wonder the 28-year-old had a Dryrobe on hand to warm her up between takes in Walthamstow, East London.

The name of her new single hasn’t been revealed, but it will be the follow-up to her hit Where Is My Husband!, which became 2026’s first No1 this week with 345 million streams on Spotify. Delighted Raye said: “I couldn’t have even asked for a better start to this next chapter.”

Raye beats the cold with a few energetic moves

Keeping warm by wrapping up in a Dryrobe between takes

Dancing in the street during video shoot in East London

Catherine’s words of comfort: ‘Come to peace with our tears and discover what it means to be alive’

FROM PAGE ONE

final video of her Mother Nature series of films, released yesterday – her 44th birthday.

In the latest instalment, titled Winter, she reflects upon “fears washing away” and “coming to peace with our tears”.

The princess explores how spending time in nature has helped her heal after she was diagnosed with cancer in early 2024 and underwent six months of chemotherapy.

Delivering the voiceover on the two-minute film, Catherine says: “Even in the coldest, darkest season, winter has a way of bringing us stillness, patience and quiet consideration. Where the stream slows just enough for us to see our own reflection. To discover the deepest parts of ourselves.

“Alongside the whispers in the pulse of every living thing. I find myself reflecting on how deeply grateful I am. For the rivers within us flow with ease, fears washed away, cleanse and purify. Come to peace with our tears and discover what it means to be alive.

“To be at one with nature; a quiet teacher and a soft voice that guides. In memory. Helping us to heal.”

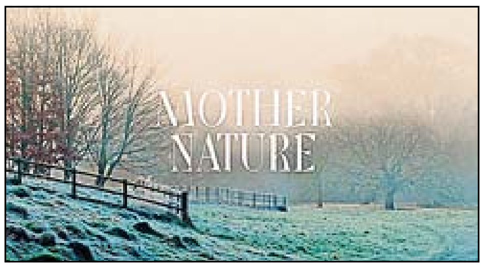
She is filmed taking an early-morning walk in Berkshire, where she lives with her husband William and three children.

Other sections feature beautiful scenery in Cumbria, Gloucestershire, London, East Sussex and the Cotswolds.

Wearing a khaki rain jacket, matching woollen scarf and a baker boy hat, the princess gazes up at the sky, runs her hand through a stream and stops to watch the flowing water from a bridge.

Her long brunette hair is worn down as she is filmed at one with the natural world, by videographer William Warr.

An aide described yesterday’s release as “the culmination of a deeply personal creative project for the princess, spotlighting humanity’s longstanding connection to nature as well as nature’s capacity to inspire us and help us to heal and grow in mind, body and spirit”.



Closing scene of Princess’ personal film project

As with the rest of the four-part series, the latest video is rooted in the need to reconnect humanity.

This is something Catherine explored in a recent essay with Harvard professor Robert Waldinger, where she warned that too much time spent on screens damages family life.

She believes that, due to the challenges of an increasingly digital world, the importance of interconnectedness – links we have with ourselves, each other and nature – takes on even more significance.

The princess wrote an emotional caption for the video: “The Mother Nature series has been a deeply personal, creative reflection on how nature has helped me heal. But it is also a story about the power of nature and creativity in collective healing.

“There is so much we can learn from mother nature, as we look to build a happier, healthier world. C.”

Catherine launched the series with the Spring episode, at the start of last year’s Mental Health Awareness Week.

That inaugural film saw her speak about how “nature has been my sanctuary”, as she championed the vital role that it can play in maintaining mental health.

She has spoken several times about the importance of the natural world in her cancer journey, with it offering solace – she is said to have taken walks and gone outdoor swimming during and after her treatment.

The video series resonates with her wider work around wellbeing, and encouraging children and families to spend more time outdoors. The film released yesterday ends the series, but Catherine is expected to continue to put nature at the heart of her work.

It is understood the princess is “excited to explore” what more can be done to harness the power of nature and creativity for human connection, healing and wellbeing for individuals, families, communities and society.

Kensington Palace said: “We look forward to sharing more on this soon. These themes will continue to be at the heart of the princess’ work moving forwards.” Catherine has focused heavily on spending time outside since her cancer diagnosis, with all of her personal health updates being filmed or captured with her surrounded by nature.

Her initial video announcing that she had been diagnosed with the disease pictured her sitting on a bench on the Windsor estate surrounded by daffodils.

In June, when her attendance at Trooping the Colour was announced, she was shown standing beneath a willow.

Then when she revealed that her course of chemotherapy had come to an end, a special video included the royal family of five spending time together in the woods and on a beach in Norfolk.

Her 44th birthday yesterday marks a year of the princess being in remission, following her initial diagnosis two years ago.

The future Queen underwent preventative chemotherapy for six months and then took a break from the public eye while she focused on her recovery.

Last January, she returned to the London hospital where she had received cancer treatment and announced on that day that she was in remission.

OPINION: PAGE 14

The Princess of Wales pauses on a bridge then dips her hand in the flowing stream, in the fourth and final instalment of her Mother Nature film series

Catherine looks at the natural world on her Berkshire walk in the film; inset, with her family

EXPRESS EXTRA

Scan here to get the best royal stories on WhatsApp

ANALYSIS

EMILY FERGUSON

Royal Editor

INSTEAD of releasing a new picture to celebrate another year around the sun, the Princess of Wales sought to mark her birthday her way.

After a difficult few years for the Wales family, with Catherine's heartwrenching cancer diagnosis coming while their three children are still young, the future Queen sought to use her special day to remind people of the power of the great outdoors.

Though she has always been an advocate for the important role nature can have on your mental health, this belief has intensified as she found solace in spending time outside during her treatment and recovery.

Utilising the woods, beaches and countryside near her homes in Windsor and Norfolk, Catherine found balance and peace.

This was exemplified by the imagery released during that period, pictures of her outside, surrounded by greenery, supported by her husband and children.

It's clear that nature has proved a real comfort to the princess and her family, which is why Catherine spoke of being "deeply grateful" in the film released yesterday.

She's not just grateful for finding peace in nature, the words reflect a deeper sense of being grateful for her health, grateful that she's now in remission and has come through a difficult year of worry and gruelling treatment.

Support

And more importantly, grateful for the unwavering support of her family – her husband, who sat with her in the hospital for hours while she was receiving her chemotherapy, her children, her parents and siblings and the wider Royal Family.

When she speaks of fears washing away, allowing us to "come to peace with our tears and discover what it means to be alive", it is clear that she is reflecting on her own journey, inferring that she has now come out of the other side.

A year on from the welcome news that she is in remission, Catherine is able to reflect on just how far she and her family have come as they look forward to a new year of beginnings and getting back to a normal routine.

Nature will continue to play a key role in her work and personal life, as she continues to encourage people, especially children, to put down their phones, tablets and computers and connect with loved ones outside.

With young people becoming increasingly reliant on screens, that message is more important than ever.

Even a short walk can help brush away the cobwebs and help you refocus and let go of whatever troubles you.

And it's a powerful message that our future Queen wants to ensure younger generations take hold of, especially as reported cases of depression, anxiety and isolation are on the rise.

Catherine knows what she says matters and by championing the healing powers of nature, she can encourage people to make a lifestyle shift that will improve their wellbeing for good.

Pictures: DARREN STAPLES / AFP, ADAM GERRARD, ANITA MARIC / SWNS, HUGH HASTINGS/GETTY

Battered Britain braced for more chaos

BY **STEPHEN BEECH**

BRITAIN was engulfed in transport chaos yesterday after Storm Goretti brought some of the worst snowfall seen in years.

Roads were blocked, flights and trains were cancelled and some 65,000 homes were left without power in the wake of the "weather bomb".

And Met Office forecasters warned that the icy blast is not over, with new snow and ice warnings issued for the weekend.

In the coming days, melting snow and rain could also bring further chaos with fears of floods for some parts.

Storm Goretti left a trail of devastation, closing many schools and burying some regions under snow.

The West Midlands was among the worst-hit, with much of Birmingham covered in the heaviest blanket of snow seen in the region for more than a decade.

Birmingham Airport suspended all flights after heavy snowfalls made it unsafe to take off or land.

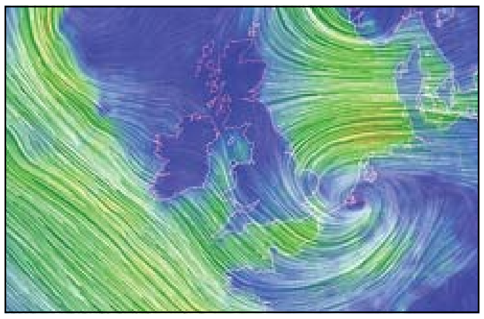
At least 69 scheduled flights in and out of Heathrow were cancelled yesterday, disrupting more than 9,000 passengers.

More than 65,000 properties were left without power, mostly in the South West but also in the Midlands and Wales, according to the National Grid.

About 44,000 were still without power yesterday and residents in Cornwall were warned that their power might not be restored until tomorrow.

Noah Law, MP for St Austell and Newquay, said: "It is expected that properties across Mid Cornwall will be facing electricity issues until Sunday."

Downing Street said support is being offered to people left without power. Damage to homes and businesses was still being assessed last night after winds of up to 99mph rocked parts of the South West.



Weather graphic shows the high winds yesterday

Historic Truro Cathedral was among the buildings damaged in Cornwall.

One Truro-based family was left shocked after three trees smashed into their home.

Rob Wilding, 50, and his wife Jenny Morris, 48, were in their kitchen extension when they heard an "almighty" gust of wind and a loud crash. Rob said: "The children were really shaken. It was a great shock because these trees are huge. It was just complete devastation."

The owners of a campsite battered on the Isles of Scilly described a "terrifying night" of extreme weather.

Jared and Melissa Thomson, who own 10-acre Garrison Holidays, said they face a massive task repairing damage caused by howling winds and rain.

Melissa said: "It was horrendous. We couldn't even go in our bedroom.

"If you put your hand on a window you could feel it. Plaster was cracking and the creaking from the roof was horrific. It felt like the roof was going to fly off."

Several shipping containers fell from two freighters off the Isle of Wight, according to the Maritime and Coastguard Agency.

Refrigerated containers were initially reported falling into the sea from a cargo ship. Seven empty containers were also said to have gone overboard from a second cargo vessel about 16 nautical miles south of St Catherine's Point, Isle of Wight.

An agency spokesman said that coastguards were "monitoring the situation closely". Train services were badly disrupted by snow, ice and fallen trees blocking the tracks.

Chiltern Railways was only operating half of its normal timetable yesterday, with no services running north of Birmingham Moor Street.

West Midlands Railway also suspended all of its services. Rail replacement buses weren't provided due to "uncertain" road conditions, it was said.

The Hope Valley Line, between Sheffield and Manchester, was also closed yesterday.

A yellow snow and ice warning issued by the Met Office, covering

LONDON

WALES

High winds on London Bridge, left; sledging in Brecon, right

'IT FELT LIKE THE HOUSE WAS GOING TO TAKE OFF', SAYS STEVE BACKSHALL

BY **JENNIE BUZAGLO**

BBC presenter Steve Backshall said the pressure from Storm Goretti made his "ears pop" as it wrecked his home in Land's End, Cornwall.

A rare red warning for wind covered much of the county on Thursday evening and Steve was soon counting the cost of the damage.

On BBC Breakfast, Steve, 52, compared being inside his home to sailing in the wind-battered Antarctic as he detailed the devastating impact of the vicious weather.

Speaking to presenters Charlie Stayt and Naga Munchetty, Steve said: "Last night, I've never seen anything like it.

"Being inside that house was like being on the bridge of a ship in the Antarctic. It was absolutely ferocious."

Explorer and naturalist Steve explained it felt like the roof of his home was about to lift and revealed several windows had blown in.

He added: "Just the pressure was incredible. You could feel it in your ears – this huge build up of pressure inside the house.

"Our ears were constantly popping and it felt like the house was just going to take off." Charlie, 63, noted that Steve and wife Helen Glover now faced a significant clean-up job after their frightening ordeal.

Steve Backshall and wife Helen Glover

Olympic rowing two-time champion Helen, 39, responded: "Yeah we do.

"Part of having kids is all the paraphernalia that comes with it.

"We tried to put as much of it inside but you realise there are sandpits at the end of the garden and we've got to go and find out where their trampoline has landed."

She added: "There's so much stuff that we tried to do damage limitation.

"But we realised it's so hard when it's beyond what we could even imagine the wind to be like."

Storm Goretti has left thousands of Britons struggling with power cuts, travel chaos and school closures across the country.

AFTER STORM'S 'WEATHER BOMB'

Duo push a vehicle off a snow-covered car park in Coalville, Leics, yesterday

EAST SUSSEX

BIRMINGHAM

Scotland and North East England, remains in place until 3pm today.

Another yellow snow and ice warning also remains in place for Northern Ireland, while a yellow warning for ice covers parts of the west of England.

There were numerous images of travel chaos across the country yesterday.

People were forced to push their vehicles off a snow-covered car park in Coalville, in Leicestershire.

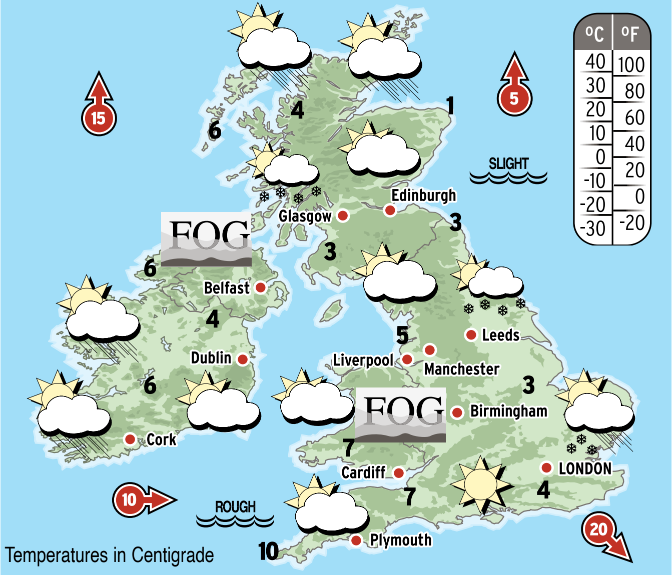
Cars were seen passing through heavy flood water in Barcombe, East Sussex, after the River Ouse broke its banks.

In Falmouth, Cornwall, a car was crushed by fallen trees caused by the raging storm.

Despite the devastation, some were keen to enjoy the snow, with several people seen sledging down hills in the Brecon Beacons, in South Wales.

Car crushed by trees in Falmouth, top; flood water in Barcombe, middle; van is stuck in Harborne, bottom; road is flooded, left; Rob Wilding's damaged home in Truro

WEATHER FORECAST



Temperatures in Centigrade

Today's summary: Chilly start; cloudy evening

North West: Cloudy with drizzle. Some sleet and mist later. Breezy with brisk winds. Cold overall. High 3C (37F).

Northern Ireland: Cloudy with drizzle early on, turning overcast. Gentle breezes, feeling cool. High 4C (39F).

Wales: Clear skies early, turning overcast. Light breezes, chilly initially, becoming mild. High 6C (43F).

Midlands: Cloudy with some mist early on. Sunny spells later. Light winds, feeling cold. High 1C (34F).

North East/Yorks: Dry and fine with sunny spells and patchy cloud. Light winds. High 3C (37F).

Scotland: Cloudy with some sunshine later. Light westerly winds, turning chilly in the evening. High 2C (36F).

East Anglia: Snow and sleet early, becoming cloudy. Light winds, turning cold by evening. High 4C (39F).

London/South East: Cloudy, turning partly clear later. Gentle winds, cold throughout the day. High 4C (39F).

South: Bright and dry with patchy cloud and sunny spells. Moderate northerly winds. Very cold. High 4C (39F).

South West: Dry with sunny periods and variable amounts of cloud. Gentle north-westerly winds. High 8C (46F).

Channel Isles: Cloudy with light rain for a time. Sunshine and showers later. Brisk westerly winds. High 9C (48F).

Sea: North Sea: Slight. Irish Sea: Slight. Channel: Slight.

UK OUTLOOK TOMORROW: Expect cold and mostly cloudy conditions with occasional sunny spells and light winds. Chilly nights with frost possible in some areas.

SIX-DAY FORECAST

Temperatures in Centigrade

	SUN			MON			TUE			WED			THU			FRI		
		min	max		min	max		min	max		min	max		min	max		min	max
London	🌧	6	6	🌧	8	12	🌧	6	11	🌦	6	10	🌧	5	10	🌦	5	9
Belfast	🌧	7	10	🌦	7	10	🌦	4	8	🌧	4	7	🌦	2	7	🌧	3	6
Birmingham	🌨	6	6	🌧	7	10	🌧	5	10	🌦	6	8	🌧	4	8	🌧	4	8
Cardiff	🌧	8	9	🌦	7	11	🌧	5	11	🌦	6	9	🌧	5	9	🌧	4	9
Glasgow	🌨	6	6	🌧	7	10	🌧	5	9	🌧	5	8	🌧	3	8	🌧	3	8
Manchester	🌨	6	6	🌦	7	10	🌧	5	10	🌦	6	8	🌧	5	9	🌧	4	8
Newcastle	🌨	2	3	🌦	6	8	🌧	5	9	🌦	5	7	🌧	4	8	🌧	4	7
Norwich	🌧	3	4	🌧	7	10	🌧	6	10	🌦	5	8	🌧	4	8	🌦	4	8
Plymouth	🌧	9	11	🌦	9	12	🌧	6	11	🌦	8	10	🌦	7	10	🌦	6	10

Britain yesterday

24 hours to 5pm	SUN (hrs)	RAIN (ins)	TEMP (min)	(max)
Aberdeen	0.0	0.02	-7	2
Aberporth	0.3	0.98	1	6
Alnwick	0.1	0.07	-1	6
Belfast	4.7	0.00	0	4
Birmingham	0.0	0.50	0	3
B'mouth	2.4	0.02	2	7
Bristol	0.1	0.28	2	6
Cardiff	0.2	0.00	2	5
Durham	0.0	0.17	0	3
Edinburgh	0.0	0.02	-2	2
Glasgow	0.0	0.04	-1	2
Hull	0.0	0.26	-1	5
Ipswich	0.0	0.25	3	3
Leeds	0.0	0.13	0	4
Lincoln	0.1	0.94	1	4
London	0.0	0.04	2	5
Manchester	0.0	0.05	1	4
Oxford	0.3	0.00	1	4
S'hampton	0.0	0.19	2	6
St Andrews	0.0	0.09	-3	3

Moon, sun and tides

MOON rises: 12.02am, sets: 10.50am
SUN rises London: 8.03am, sets: 4.13pm
Manchester rises: 8.21am, sets: 4.12pm

◐ **New Moon**
18 January

HIGH TIDE

London B'ge	(6.20am), (6.52pm)
Liverpool	(3.40am), (4.00pm)
Greenock	(5.16am), (5.06pm)
Dover	(3.34am), (4.06pm)

Britain Extremes:
(24 hours to 11pm Thursday)

Warmest: St. Mary's 8C (46F)
Coldest: Aboyne -12C (10F)
Wettest: Whitechurch 1.57in.
Sunniest: Thomastown 2.9hr.

Lighting-up times

Belfast	4.21pm-8.40am
Birmingham	4.15pm-8.13am
Bristol	4.23pm-8.11am
Glasgow	4.07pm-8.41am
London	4.13pm-8.02am
Manchester	4.12pm-8.20am
Newcastle	4.01pm-8.25am

Europe forecast

Today			Tomorrow		
Amsterdam	Cloudy	-2C/28F	**Amsterdam**	Fair	-2C/28F
Brussels	Snow	0C/32F	**Brussels**	Fair	0C/32F
Dublin	Fair	6C/43F	**Dublin**	Showers	11C/52F
Frankfurt	Snow	1C/34F	**Frankfurt**	Sunny	-1C/30F
Geneva	Snow	1C/34F	**Geneva**	Fair	1C/34F
Lisbon	Fair	14C/57F	**Lisbon**	Drizzle	15C/59F
Madrid	Sunny	10C/50F	**Madrid**	Sunny	11C/52F
Paris	Cloudy	5C/41F	**Paris**	Cloudy	4C/39F
Rome	Showers	12C/54F	**Rome**	Sunny	12C/54F

Around the world yesterday

		C	F
Amsterdam	Rain	3	37
Athens	Fair	14	57
Barcelona	Sunny	17	63
Berlin	Snow	-5	23
Budapest	Cloudy	-4	25
Cairo	Sunny	19	66
Cape Town	-	26	79
Casablanca	Cloudy	16	61
Corfu	Shwrs	8	46
Dublin	Fair	3	37
Dubrovnik	Shwrs	7	45
Faro	Fair	16	61
Florence	Shwrs	13	55
Gibraltar	Sunny	14	57
Guernsey	Cloudy	8	46
Hong Kong	Sunny	17	63
Istanbul	Sunny	5	41
Jersey	Shwrs	8	46
Larnaca	Shwrs	17	63
Las Palmas	Sunny	19	66
Los Angeles	Sunny	17	63
Luxor	Sunny	23	73
Malaga	Fair	15	59
Mallorca	Sunny	16	61
Malta	Sunny	16	61
Melbourne	-	41	106
Miami	Fair	27	81
Moscow	Snow	-10	14
Nairobi	Sunny	24	75
New Delhi	Sunny	14	57
New York	Fair	9	48
Nice	Sunny	15	59
Nicosia	Rain	14	57
Perth	Fair	24	75
Prague	Snow	-4	25
Singapore	Cloudy	28	82
Stockholm	Cloudy	-3	27
Sydney	Sunny	31	88
Tel Aviv	Thndr	17	63
Tenerife	Sunny	21	70
Toronto	Cloudy	5	41
Tunis	Sunny	17	63
Venice	Cloudy	4	39
Vienna	Snow	-6	21
Warsaw	Cloudy	-9	16

LIVE WEATHER SERVICE 0906 156 0206

CALL OUR WEATHER LINE WHERE YOU CAN SPEAK LIVE WITH OUR EXPERTS FOR UP-TO-DATE FORECASTS. CALLS COST £1.50 PER MINUTE PLUS YOUR TELEPHONE COMPANY'S NETWORK ACCESS CHARGE. SERVICE OPEN 8AM - 6PM DAILY. SP SPOKE: 0333 202 3390

Supplied by **MeteoGroup**

RAPE, MURDER AND

Foreigners held

EXCLUSIVE

BY **MICHAEL KNOWLES**
Home Affairs Editor

FOREIGN nationals were arrested more than 172,000 times in a year, including for murder, rape and grooming offences, police figures reveal.

Overseas citizens were collared for at least 50,507 violent offences, 12,151 sex crimes, 13,864 drug offences and 13,400 thefts.

Analysis of force data for the year to last March revealed foreign nationals were arrested for at least 172,889 alleged crimes.

The Centre for Migration Control (CMC), which collated the figures, said the UK should consider Donald Trump-style red lists of countries.

Their proposals would see visas restricted or limited for countries that refuse to take back illegal migrants or whose nationals are linked to higher crime rates.

The CMC said the true arrest figures will be even higher, as five forces, including Merseyside and Essex, could only supply statistics for the first 10 months of 2024.

Robert Bates, CMC research director, said: "It should be simple: any foreign national falling foul of any of our laws must be removed and prevented from returning. We must leave the European Convention on Human Rights to block appeals that keep foreign convicts on our streets."

Shadow Home Secretary Chris Philp said: "These figures are appalling. Innocent British citizens are being murdered, raped and robbed in our thousands by legions of foreign criminals.

"Foreign criminals should not even be here. Every single foreign criminal needs to be rapidly deported back to their home country – with no delays and no messing around with endless court cases. The ECHR and modern slavery legislation are often used by murderers, rapists and other criminals to avoid deportation.

"The Conservative plan is therefore to leave the ECHR and remove modern slavery laws so that every foreign criminal can be quickly deported. But Keir Starmer's Labour is too weak."

Figures obtained by the CMC reveal the Metropolitan Police arrested foreign nationals for 52,306 offences in the year to March. Greater Manchester Police picked up 15,015, West Midlands 9,716, West Yorkshire 6,943, Kent 5,250 and Thames Valley Police 4,583. Nationally, overseas citizens are arrested for 473 crimes every day, or 20 every hour. The Express has revealed the Home Office is so desperate for failed asylum seekers and foreign criminals to leave voluntarily that they are offered help to set up businesses, and access education and accommodation for "up to five nights" in their home country.

People removed to a host of countries, including Nigeria, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Jamaica, can also request someone to meet them at the airport and receive help "finding and reuniting" with family members.

Tolerance

But they are also being shown how they could migrate legally.

Police are not "currently mandated to record nationality on arrest", government sources said, adding the Home Office aims to improve its data.

Mr Trump has introduced a travel ban and visa restrictions for more

Chris Philp blasted 'legions of criminals'

EXPRESS VOTE

Should the UK adopt a Trump-style red list of countries that ban returns?

YES: 0901 133 4440
NO: 0901 133 4441
Calls cost 50p plus network access charge

Yes text DXYES to 63333
No text DXNO to 63333
Texts cost 50p plus standard network rate

You must have the bill payer's permission. Vote closes at midnight tonight. The Daily Express may contact you by post, SMS and/or email with offers, goods or services that may be of interest to you. To stop receiving SMS messages text 'NSNOINFO' to the originating number. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390.

Albanian gang who stole £1m in burglary spree set weekly gold targets

BY **MICHAEL KNOWLES**

AN Albanian crime gang who stole £1million worth of goods from wealthy property owners across the UK were caught after posing in photos with wads of cash and stolen designer jewellery.

Endrit Nikolli, 27, Kristian Gropcaj, 30, George Lleshaj, 31, Krisjian Dedndreaj, 28, and Sidorjan Lleshi, 26, targeted large homes and mansions across several counties in a series of high-value burglaries.

Detectives from several forces linked the gang to at least 44 raids across the country between December 2023 and July last year.

A court heard they would set weekly targets for the amount of gold they wanted to steal, while Nikolli and his British girlfriend Jade Tubb, 33, wrote love letters referring to each other as infamous US outlaws Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow.

The burglars, who have admitted conspiracy to commit burglary and conspiracy to possess criminal property, would typically gain entry by using ladders to access first-floor windows and balconies before ransacking properties, stealing jewellery, designer handbags, watches and cash. Some items have been recovered but the vast majority are believed to have been sold on.

The gang were rumbled when police launched a probe into a series of burglaries across the eastern part of Cheshire, including incidents in Macclesfield, Weston and Willaston and Prestbury – home to many Premier League footballers.

Other force areas reported similar incidents across Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire and Staffordshire,

Designer jewellery among the haul

CORRECTIONS AND COMPLAINTS

If we've published anything factually inaccurate, please contact the readers' editor by email at expressletters@express.co.uk or write to Readers' Editor, Daily Express at One Canada Square, London E14 5AP and, once verified, we'll correct it as soon as possible. The Daily Express and Sunday Express are published by Express Newspapers, a subsidiary company of Reach PLC, which is a member of IPSO, the Independent Press Standards Organisation. We adhere to the Editors' Code Of Practice as enforced by IPSO, which is contactable for advice at IPSO Gate House, 1 Farringdon Street, EC4M 7LG. Website www.ipso.co.uk, telephone 0300123 2220, email advice@ipso.co.uk. If you have a complaint concerning a potential breach of the Code of Practice, we will deal with your complaint directly or IPSO can refer your complaint to us. Go to www.reachplc.com/how-to-complain where you can view our Complaints Policy and Procedure. A How To Complain pack is also available by writing to the Legal & Compliance Dept, Reach PLC, One Canada Square, London E14 5AP.

You can contact the editor by emailing **geoff.maynard@express.co.uk**

Subscribe to the Daily and Sunday Express and save 10%. Call **0345 1494848** or visit **express.reachsubs.co.uk**

OPINION **14** WINE **34** SUDOKU **36** PUZZLES **42-43** TRAVEL **45-50** GARDENING **60-61** CITY **65**

GROOMING AMONG TALLY for 470 crimes every day

and detectives were able to link the break-ins through footwear marks.

Officers then used Automatic Number Plate Recognition technology to identify vehicles present at all of the burglaries – including a red Ford Focus which was insured to Gropcaj.

They also found that a hire car booked by Tubb was used.

Phone checks revealed Gropcaj, from Birmingham, was in contact with Nikolli, Dedndreaj and Lleshaj, all of Walsall, and met regularly at a coffee shop in the Second City's jewellery quarter.

Officers also recovered messages which revealed Lleshi, of Sheffield, was the sixth member of the gang.

Police were also able to establish Nikolli was in a relationship with Tubb, who admitted conspiracy to possess criminal property and will be sentenced at Chester crown court on February 20 along with the others.

Sidorjan Lleshi, left and right, with wads of cash and armfuls of watches

Accomplice Endrit Nikolli

Krisjian Dedndreaj also in gang

than 30 countries. These include Afghanistan, Libya, Republic of the Congo, Venezuela and Yemen.

Reform UK MP Lee Anderson said: "This report is further evidence of what we have said all along. Foreign criminals are a threat to our national security, they are a danger to girls and women on our streets. Reform will make Britain safer again, beginning with the deportation of criminals and zero tolerance policing."

The Home Office said: "We do not recognise these figures.

"We will not allow foreign criminals and illegal migrants to exploit our laws. We are reforming human rights laws and replacing the broken appeals system so we can scale up deportations. All Foreign national offenders who receive a prison sentence in the UK are referred for deportation at the earliest opportunity."

OPINION: PAGE 14

Released sex pest on knife and raid rap

BY **TRISTAN KIRK**

A SEX offender whose accidental release from prison caused a national storm has admitted burglary and carrying a knife.

Brahim Kaddour-Cherif, 24, *inset*, was at the centre of a manhunt in November after he was mistakenly set free from HMP Wandsworth while awaiting trial.

The Algerian, who has been overstaying his visa since 2020, was convicted in 2024 for exposing himself in a London park.

On Tuesday, Kaddour-Cherif appeared at Snaresbrook crown court to plead guilty to burglary after he broke into a garage in Walthamstow, East London, to steal bikes last January.

Yesterday, he appeared at Kingston crown court by videolink from HMP Pentonville to plead guilty to carrying a knife in South West London in November 2023. He will be sentenced at a later date.

COMMENT

ROBERT BATES

Centre for Migration Control

EVERYONE can see that migrant crime is a serious problem in this country. A pan-Whitehall effort is under way to keep the public in the dark about what is happening in their own country.

And well they might. Because once the full picture is revealed, we will see a complete collapse in trust in our institutions.

Research by the Centre for Migration Control has revealed that, in the last year of available data, a foreign national was arrested every three minutes for offences that include rape, murder, and the sexual grooming of children. The Ministry of Justice holds data, via the Police National Computer, on the nationalities of those convicted but refuses to publish it.

We do know there are nearly 11,000 foreign nationals in our prisons. There are 19,000 migrants who have served jail time for serious crimes but, as the ECHR makes it difficult to deport them, are now back in the communities where their offence took place. So what needs to happen? A foreign national offender is only eligible for deportation if they are given a sentence of more than twelve months in prison. This is unduly lenient. For example, Syrian Qaid Al-Aswad, who was given just a suspended sentence for sexually assaulting three women, is not automatically eligible for deportation.

It should be simple: any foreign national falling foul of any of our laws must be removed and prevented from returning. We must leave the ECHR to block appeals that keep foreign convicts on our streets and we certainly should not be, as is now the case, giving foreign criminals financial and welfare support once they return to their own country. Committing a crime in Britain as a foreign national should be made into an aggravating offence that carries stricter sentencing for the basic fact that they have abused our hospitality.

We must also stop bad apples from entering in the first place. We should follow the lead of President Trump and introduce a red list of countries, banning visas to those nations that refuse to take back illegal migrants and are overrepresented in crime stats.

We must also make it a requirement for all those applying for visas to produce a Criminal Record Certificate. Between 2021 and 2023, hundreds of thousands of migrants were given work visas without having to produce the equivalent of a DBS check to the Home Office.

The people have had enough. Enough of a system that prioritises the human rights of migrants over the safety and security of Brits, and enough of a political class that is too timid to do anything about it.

FIND THE BEST OF THE EXPRESS
Get the Express App on your mobile device's app store

DAILY EXPRESSO

Watch The Daily Expresso every weekday from 5pm on YouTube, Apple Podcasts and Spotify

▶ OUR WEBSITE
▶ YOUTUBE
▶ NEWSLETTERS

@DailyExpress

Iran protests erupt

Statue of dead regime military leader is toppled

Vehicles burning in Tehran and, below, an angry crowd in Iran's capital

EXCLUSIVE

BY **RICHARD ASHMORE**

IRAN is being rocked by the biggest demonstrations it has seen for 15 years, which could even topple the hardline Islamic regime.

Thousands have flocked to the streets in all 31 provinces, including in the capital Tehran, where protesters rallied again yesterday in a sustained show of defiance against the Supreme Leader, Ali Khamenei, 86.

A source in Tehran told the Daily Express the people involved in this latest round of protests were different from previous student and civil rights demonstrations, with shopkeepers and farmers now taking to the streets.

He warned that if a crack started to show in the government, it could be gone "in weeks". He added: "The regime has been buying military equipment from China, North Korea and Russia. They have been spending more on military and staff wages because they had to raise the pay to satisfy them.

"This has made everything very expensive for ordinary people."

Soaring inflation and food and water shortages have been blamed for the uprising which has lasted 13 days.

Security services have fired on demonstrators and large fires have broken out in several cities in attacks on public buildings.

At least 42 people have been killed in the unrest, with more than 2,270 in custody, said aid agencies.

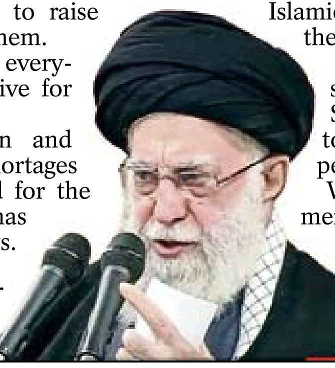
But the exact death toll is hard to verify as the Iranian regime has cut off all internet access.

A surgeon said they had been "operating all night" in Tehran, and the number of protesters injured was higher than those hurt during the 12-day war with Israel in June.

In a fiery address to supporters, Khamenei described protesters as "terrorists" trying to please Donald Trump. Religious zealots have ruled the country since it became an Islamic Republic in 1979, when the Shah was overthrown.

Reza Pahlavi, the exiled son of Iran's late former Shah, called on Mr Trump to "intervene to help the people of Iran".

When asked about Khamenei possibly fleeing to Russia, the US president told the media he believes he is "looking to go someplace".



Iran's Supreme leader Ali Khamenei

Vance in Muslim group ban row

BY **MICHAEL KNOWLES**

US vice-president JD Vance heaped pressure on Labour to ban the extremist Muslim Brotherhood over fears it is infiltrating British life.

The United Arab Emirates has restricted funding for its students at UK universities, furious at the UK's decision not to proscribe the brotherhood, which it deems to be a terrorist organisation.

Researchers here believe the group has tried to "place" supporters in "schools, councils and charities" to spread their extreme ideology.

Responding to the UAE's move on university funding, Mr Vance said: "Some of our best Muslim allies in the Gulf think the Islamist indoctrination in certain parts of the West is too dangerous." Reform UK leader Nigel Farage said: "Decent Muslim countries cannot believe how weak the UK is on extremism."

There are concerns the group has infiltrated campuses, using student organisations to invite Islamist speakers. The Henry Jackson Society said: "Political Islamism aims to influence public life and weaken democratic norms."

2025 Which? Awards BANKING BRAND OF THE YEAR

Gain 175 pounds this January.

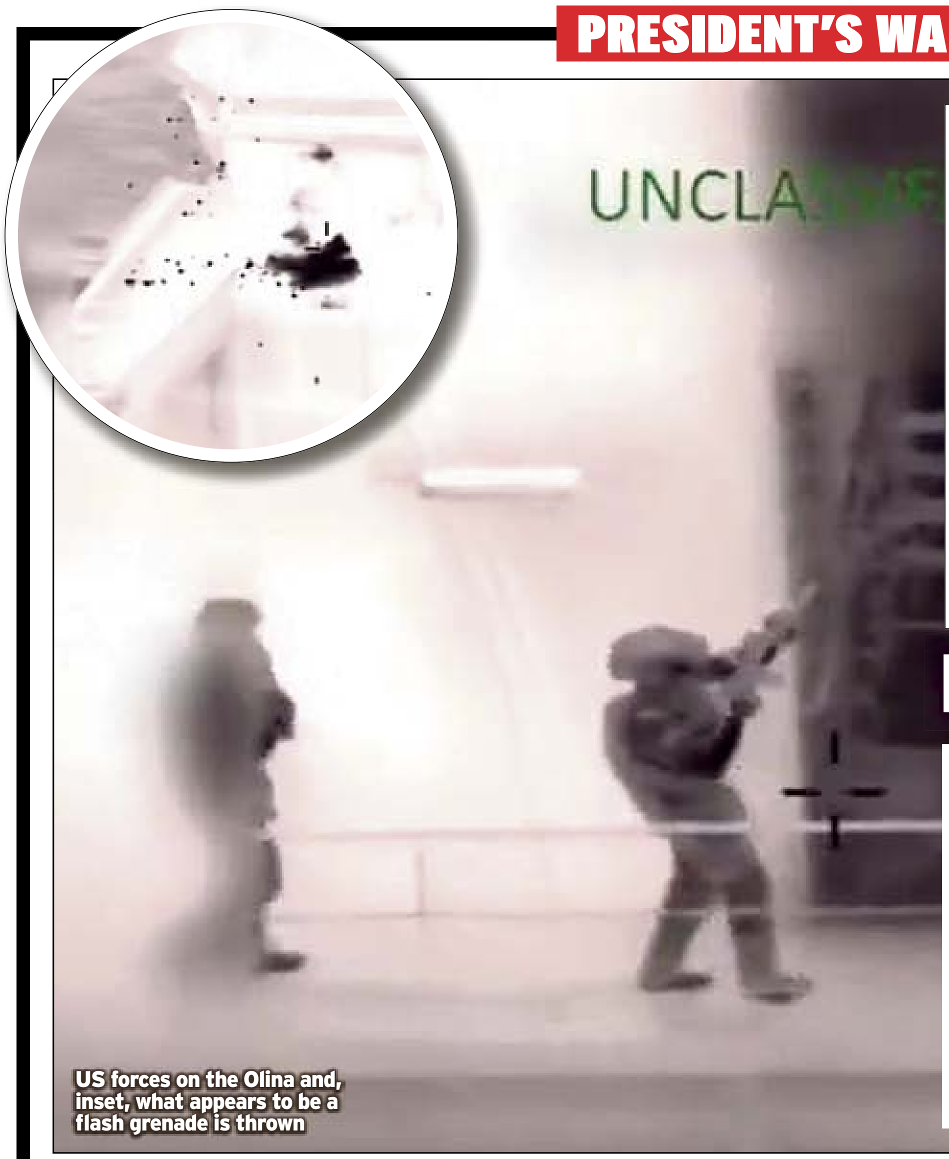
Switch your current account to the **Which?** Banking Brand of the Year and get £175.

nationwide
A good way to bank

CURRENT ACCOUNT SWITCH GUARANTEE

Limited time offer. UK residents 18+. Complete a full switch to FlexPlus, FlexDirect or FlexAccount and move 2 direct debits across within 28 days of account opening or applying to switch to an existing account. Pay in £1,000+ and make one eligible debit card payment within 31 days of account opening or applying to switch to an existing account. Must be your first switch offer since 2021, exceptions apply. Offer can be changed, withdrawn or replaced at any time. T&Cs apply, see nationwide.co.uk. Information correct as at 3 January 2026. Nationwide Building Society. Nationwide House, Pipers Way, Swindon, Wiltshire, SN38 1NW.

PRESIDENT'S WARNING SHOT TO EUROPE



US forces on the Olina and, inset, what appears to be a flash grenade is thrown

Team from helicopter take control of Olina

Marines storm oil tanker in Caribbean

BY **FRANCES MILLAR**

US FORCES have boarded another oil tanker in the Caribbean Sea, according to the US military, as Donald Trump's administration continues to target sanctioned vessels travelling to and from Venezuela.

The pre-dawn action was carried out by US marines and navy, taking part in the months-long build-up of forces in the region, according to the US Southern Command.

It declared "there is no safe haven for criminals" as it announced the seizure of the 252-metre Olina tanker.

The Southern Command posted footage on social media of a US helicopter landing on the vessel and US personnel searching the deck.

The Olina, built in 2005, is the fifth tanker seized in a bid control the distribution of Venezuela's oil globally.

It follows the ousting of president Nicolas Maduro in a surprise night-time raid.

Southern Command said the navy and marine corps forces were supporting the Department of Homeland Security in the latest swoop.

Trump: US needs Greenland more than it needs Nato

BY **JONATHAN WALKER**
Whitehall Editor

DONALD Trump has threatened to blow Nato apart to fulfil his "need" to own Greenland.

The US president said "it may be a choice" between preserving the military alliance and seizing the island, a self-governing territory of Nato member Denmark.

He said: "That's what I feel is psychologically needed for success. I think that ownership gives you a thing that you can't do, whether you're talking about a lease or a treaty.

"Ownership gives you things and elements that you can't get from just signing a document."

The US has a military base in Greenland and can expand its presence under a 1951 agreement.

Invasion

But Mr Trump says America must own the island outright for "national protection". He claims, without foundation, it is "covered with Russian and Chinese ships".

The White House has said that "utilising the US military is always an option" to taking Greenland.

Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen has warned that a US invasion would mean the end of Nato.

The 1949 treaty deems that an attack on one of the 32 member states is an attack on them all.

The collective defence of an attacked member "may or may not involve the use of armed force". Sir Keir has attempted to reassure the US president that Europe will protect Greenland from hostile nations such as Russia. No10 reported that in a phone call on Thursday evening, the PM told him: "European allies had stepped up in recent months to defend Euro-Atlantic interests but more could be done to protect the area." However, in an interview, Mr Trump said of Nato members: "I think we'll always get along with Europe, but I want them to shape up.

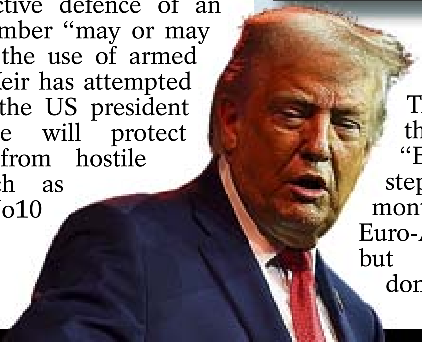
"If you look at Nato, Russia I can tell you is not at all concerned with any other country but us."

He added: "I've been very loyal to Europe. I've done a good job. If it weren't for me, Russia would have all of Ukraine right now."

Diplomatic

Earlier this week, the UK and European allies said they would "not stop defending" Greenland's territorial integrity in a joint statement, seen as a message to the US. Yesterday Defence Secretary John Healey said there was "no question" of British bases being used to support US military action against Greenland.

He insisted the UK would only act "on a fully legal basis". US Secretary of State Marco Rubio will meet Danish officials next week as diplomatic talks continue.



Mr Trump wants island

Renee moments before she was shot

ICE AGENT'S FOOTAGE 'SHOWS MUM BEFORE SHOOTING'

BY **BRIAN DILLON**

FOOTAGE emerged last night of the moments leading up to the fatal shooting in Minneapolis of a mum that has sparked protests.

The footage was reportedly captured by the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agent who had confronted Renee Nicole Good, 37, at what the US administration called a protest against the planned detention of Somali migrants.

In the video, Good's wife, Rebecca, could be heard requesting the man believed to be ICE officer Jonathan 'Jon' Ross to "show his face" and asking him, "You want to come at us? I say go get yourself some lunch big boy. Go ahead."

The clip then shows the car driving off, with the noise of what appear to be two gunshots ringing out. Anger has continued to spill on to the streets of the city over the shooting with protesters chanting "ICE out now" and carrying signs reading "killer ICE off our streets".

Unrest also followed a second shooting, on Thursday afternoon in Portland, Oregon, when a man and woman were wounded outside a hospital by a Border Patrol agent.

The FBI and Oregon Department of Justice are investigating, while Portland's mayor urged ICE to suspend operations until the inquiry was complete.

A small number of arrests were made during protests outside ICE offices in the city.

Next U-turn will be on jury trials, says Labour MP

David Lammy may rethink policy

BY **JONATHAN WALKER**
AND **MICHAEL KNOWLES**

KEIR Starmer's U-turn over pub taxes is "a sign of a confident government" a Cabinet minister claimed, as Labour MPs predicted more policy changes to come, including a rethink on axing many jury trials.

Labour chairwoman Anna Turley insisted: "I think it's a sign of a government that is actually in touch with people, that is listening to people, and that is responding.

"We're here to represent the people that we live amongst and, if a policy isn't right, I think it's a sign of a confident government."

Chancellor Rachel Reeves is now preparing a support package for the pubs sector following an outcry over a major hike in business rates, which are set to rise by £6,000 for the average community pub.

The fees threaten to put many venues out of business, according to the British Beer and Pub Association.

Labour MP Karl Turner, a former barrister, predicted the next U-turn would come over plans to limit trial by jury, as Justice Secretary David Lammy visited Toronto to see how judge-led trials operate there.

Mr Turner, an outspoken critic of the policy, said: "The government is listening hard to every stakeholder in the criminal justice system on curtailing the right to elect jury trial.

"They are about to announce that they have listened. Stand by for David Lammy's statement."

U-turns since Labour came to power 18 months ago include limiting winter fuel payments for pensioners; restricting disability benefits; day-one rights for workers in a new job, inheritance tax on family farms and more.

The government has also delayed an announcement on reforms to special needs education after an outcry from parents and MPs, and there are reports that it may scrap this idea too.

Shadow Chancellor Sir Mel Stride said the Treasury must go further and announce a package of support for the entire retail and hospitality sector. He said: "Starmer and Reeves have been dragged kicking and screaming into yet another U-turn – this time on their disastrous Pubs Tax. They can't say they weren't warned.

"The problem is far bigger than pubs. Businesses across Britain are at breaking point because of Rachel Reeves' choices. She must now go further and give the rest of the retail, hospitality and leisure sector the support they need. It is remarkable that ministers now claim to be listening, when they chose not to listen before pressing ahead.

"Labour announces policy first, only to confront the consequences later."

Kate Nicholls, chairwoman of UKHospitality, also called for "a hospitality-wide solution", saying the entire industry is affected by business rate hikes, not just pubs.

Labour's Karl Turner

Armed forces facing a £28bn shortfall as tensions mount

BY **JONATHAN WALKER**

THE UK's top military chief has warned PM Sir Keir Starmer that Britain's armed forces face a £28billion funding shortfall in the next four years.

Air Chief Marshal Sir Richard Knighton, *inset*, revealed the Ministry of Defence assessment at a No10 meeting. It was also attended by the Chancellor and Defence Secretary, and took place before Christmas, but details have only now emerged.

NATO officials warned there is a real danger the UK could soon find itself at war.

James Appathurai said: "There is a real risk. We have heard that from our intelligence chiefs, from our political leaders across Europe. And we need to be strong so that there isn't war. The best deterrent will be that we are capable."

Sir Keir is understood to have ordered an overhaul of the defence investment plan.

An MoD spokesman said: "The defence budget is rising to record levels as this government delivers the biggest boost since the Cold War, totalling £270bn this parliament alone.

"We are working flat out on the defence investment plan, which will fix the outdated, underfunded programme we inherited."

Sir Richard took over as Chief of the Defence Staff in September after delivering a strategic defence review.

Got your winning numbers?
Play on app
Lotto
Your numbers
02 24 31 4
08 11 19 29 58
06 15 24 37 4
Lotto
It could be you
Account Terms, Rules & Procedures apply. Players must be 18+ and physically located in the UK/IOM.

Fiona got no votes in the round table but a hug from Faithful James; circled, below, Ben, who was 'murdered' on the hit BBC show

'I was the master of my own downfall'

But former secret Traitor Fiona 'had an absolute ball'

BY **NICOLA METHVEN**

SHE started as the red-cloaked "secret" villain but last night Fiona was mistress of her own demise on The Traitors, as she was sent packing from the castle.

And despite her round table banishment, she said afterwards she would not change a thing, adding: "I had an absolute ball."

The 62-year-old local government officer, from Swansea, had left viewers open-mouthed when she turned on Rachel and called her a liar over her truthful revelation that Amanda was a former senior Met detective.

But last night it was obvious her plan to put heat on fellow Traitor Rachel had backfired after she did not get a single vote at the round table. Fiona said: "The action I took was to get it all out in the open and I felt it was my only chance as Rachel was such a formidable player and I didn't think I'd have another opportunity.

"I was really the master of my own downfall because I needed to confront Rachel just to be sure that she was a team player and not playing singularly."

Viewers realised third Traitor Stephen would back Rachel once it was clear Fiona being ousted would clear his name as being the baddie in the "library five" who targeted Ross by killing Ben.

● *The next episode of the BBC One show is on Wednesday at 8pm.*

Claudia Winkleman with the red cloak

CHOOSE ONE PASTA DISH AND ONE SAUCE
MEAL DEAL £4.50
SAVE 75P
ANY 3 £12
SAVE UP TO £3*
ANY 3 £10
SAVE £2**
ONLY £2.75
ONLY £1.30
ONLY £1.75 EACH
ONLY £4

Slimming World Free Food

HEALTHY EATING THAT FITS YOUR LIFESTYLE

86 TO CHOOSE FROM

EXCLUSIVE TO

Iceland & the food WAREHOUSE

ORDER ONLINE FOR SAME DAY DELIVERY^

Slimming World products available in-store and online. Selected UK Iceland and The Food Warehouse stores only, excludes Iceland Local and The Range Stores. Selected products only. Meal Deal: Choose one sauce and pasta dish for a £4.50 Meal Deal. 3 for £12: 3 (three) qualifying products must be purchased in one transaction to redeem the offer. *Save up to £3 based on the purchase of Slimming World 500G Beef Rendang, £5.00, £10/1kg at their standard advertised price versus the promotional price. 3 for £10: 3 (three) qualifying products must be purchased in one transaction to redeem the offer. **Save £2 based on the purchase of Slimming World 400g Bang Bang Chicken Lunch Bowl, £4.00, £10/1kg at their standard advertised price versus the promotional price. See in-store or online for more to choose from. Online: a minimum spend of £25 is required to place an order online. A small basket charge of £4 will apply if your online basket value is between £25 and £39.99. The small basket charge will not apply when your online basket value is £40 or more. This charge will be detailed in your basket before you check out.^Same Day Delivery: Slots are subject to availability. Customers are unable to make amendments to same day delivery slot and would need to cancel the order and reorder the goods if they wish to make any changes. Delivery address for any online orders must be within the delivery catchment area. Products and delivery slots are subject to availability. Terms and Conditions apply, see www.iceland.co.uk/terms.

DAILY EXPRESS
One Canada Square, London E14 5AP
Tel: 020 8612 7000 (outside UK: +44 20 8612 7000)

We must follow Trump's example on foreigners

IT is utterly despicable that foreign nationals were arrested more than 172,000 times in a year, including for murder, rape and grooming.

The staggering number of alleged crimes – 172,889 – have, quite rightly, prompted calls for the UK to copy Donald Trump and introduce a red list of countries. And the only way we can do that is by leaving the European Convention on Human Rights.

We will never be able to fully grip the problem until we can properly restrict visas for countries that refuse to take back illegal migrants or whose nationals are linked to higher crime rates.

It should be simple. Any foreign national falling foul of any of our laws must be removed and prevented from returning.

Appeals that keep foreign convicts on our streets must be blocked.

Committing a crime in Britain as a foreign national should be made into an aggravating offence that carries stricter sentencing for the basic fact that they have abused our hospitality.

This can only be done, as both the Conservatives and Reform UK are demanding, by quitting the ECHR.

Keir Starmer and the Labour Party don't want us to leave despite the ECHR and modern slavery legislation often being used by murderers, rapists and other criminals to avoid deportation.

The US president announced a travel ban and visa restrictions for more than 30 countries as part of efforts to reduce illegal immigration and crime in America.

He has already succeeded in slashing illegal migration to virtually zero.

It's time for the UK to get tough too.

Costly delaying tactics

NOT only are the nation's peers dithering and delaying as they debate new assisted dying laws, they are costing taxpayers almost £2million as a result.

There are real concerns Parliament's upper chamber could run out of time to properly scrutinise the legislation, meaning it will fail.

For many peers this will be welcome as they have used every tactic to drag their feet since the bill's historic passing by MPs last summer.

Despite being given extra debating time, at the current rate of progress, the clock will run out and the House of Lords will fail to complete the process of scrutiny.

Peers can claim an income tax-free allowance of £371 a day to attend parliament. If average attendances remain the same then the overall bill for peers alone will be £1.95million.

This is not acceptable. They must get a move on. People's lives depend on it and they're running out of time.

Happy birthday, Kate

WE are delighted to see that the Princess of Wales is on the mend after her cancer battle.

It is wonderfully refreshing to hear Catherine, on her 44th birthday, praise the healing power of nature as she shares her deeply personal journey back to health.

Despite the cold, we should all take note, brave those elements and get outside.

Many happy returns, Your Royal Highness, and wishing you many more birthdays in the future.

I still believe in Britain...but you need to do so too

Despite claims the country is broken, its people persist and unite when needed

Piotr Wilczek

Guest Columnist

OPEN A newspaper. Switch on the TV. Listen to the radio. "Britain is broken. Nothing functions properly. Everything is getting worse." Trains aren't just broken – they're unreliable and expensive. The health service is in crisis. Schools aren't functioning properly. The streets aren't safe. This is the story we are repeatedly told.

But after three-and-a-half years as Poland's ambassador to Britain, I don't recognise a land of constant collapse.

Britain is facing serious problems, but problems do not add up to failure. Pressure is not the same thing as breakdown. Frustration is not the same as collapse. Externally, Britain remains a strong country.

The rule of law applies. Elections count. Transitions of power occur smoothly. The judicial system is independent. The media are free. All these are accomplishments.

Public services are stretched but still operating. The NHS handles millions of patients every year. The train service is the backbone of the country, even though it is unreliable. Schools educate the next generation. This is neither a failed state nor a country facing collapse, but a society that is overcrowded and ageing.

The cliché example of a rising and a falling power being juxtaposed is the relationship between Britain and Poland. Poland has changed – it has improved roads and cleaner cities. I experience this every day.

NONETHELESS, it is not a zero-sum game, in the sense that the success of the former is not dependent on the decline of the latter. Many Poles who spent years working in the UK are now returning home, bringing with them skills, savings, and invaluable experience.

This quiet reverse migration does not signal a weakening of ties but rather their deepening. Our two nations remain linked by history – from wartime alliances to shared struggles for freedom – and by continuing human connections that endure beyond political shifts or economic cycles.

Britain continues to punch above its weight. London remains a truly world-class city. The best minds are drawn to British universities.

British science, culture and financial systems influence global trends. English law and the English language form the basis of many others.

Brexit looms over everything. It polarised the country and upset settled assumptions, but it was not chaos. It was a democratic choice made after due deliberation in Parliament. This is an important point.

The one thing I noticed, however, is not decay but persistence. Complaining goes on, and then people get on with it. Nurses turn up. Teachers turn up. Engineers, shopkeepers, scientists and small-business owners turn up. Britain carries on because it is a country of persistence.

But what explains the appeal of decline? Why does it resonate so strongly?

In part, this is because confidence is a scarce commodity across the West.

The rise of China, India and East Asia is shifting the global balance. Britain, once central to the exercise of power, is caught in the shock of even a modest drift from the centre.

A crisis-prone media culture combines with debate-driven pessimism, translating uncertainty into declinism.

Watching from Warsaw, nothing in Britain suggests a country teetering on the edge of catastrophe. It looks more like a state that has temporarily forgotten what it still possesses.

This is not decline, but shock – the shock of losing effortless dominance in a changing world. Leadership now has to be argued for and defended. But doubt is not weakness.

I have witnessed a functioning Britain – systems taking the strain, people complaining but carrying on. This is what holds the country together when others might fall apart.

CONFIDENCE does not require pretending that everything is fine. Confidence means knowing that when things go wrong, the system can correct itself. This is something Britain still possesses. The problem is not failure, but allowing the loudest pessimists to determine how Britain presents itself to the world. Countries lose influence not through criticism, but when they stop believing they can adapt.

Britain has adapted before. Britain will adapt again. What it needs now is a stronger sense of proportion and the conviction that difficulty does not equal destiny. That isn't decline. That's Britain in transition.

● *Piotr Wilczek served as Poland's Ambassador to the UK from 2022 to 2025 and previously as Ambassador to the United States from 2016 to 2021*

'Nothing here suggests a country teetering on edge of catastrophe'

Carole Malone

FUN, FEISTY AND FEARLESS

Email me at carole.malone@reachplc.com ● Follow me on Twitter @thecarolemalone

Free NHS jab? Fat chance

KEIR STARMER wants to send British troops to Ukraine although God knows how he can afford to with a £28billion black hole in the defence budget.

This is yet another ill-thought out, expensive mistake from a PM who hasn't a clue what he's doing. Deploying British troops will do beggar-all to help Ukrainians. Zelensky has already said he'd need a peacekeeping force of 200,000 to protect the country's borders and Europe, in total, can only muster a fraction of that so it will achieve nothing.

And what happens if Putin attacks them? What then? World War Three? The only real guarantee of Ukraine's future security is its capacity to defend itself, which is why European leaders should be giving it the weapons it needs instead of putting our troops in harm's way.

ACTOR David Tennant has changed his real surname – McDonald – to his "star" name Tennant. Why? Is he trying to forget who he is and where he came from?

IN A ONE-LINE Facebook post, the Home Office – which is clearly doing stand-up comedy now – says it has deported 50,000 migrants since Labour came to power. So, where's the evidence? Show us the photos of them being loaded onto planes. Because the only photo on that Facebook post was of one solitary immigrant being led up the steps of a plane by six blokes in high-vis jackets.

This government really does take us all for fools. If it really had deported that many people it would have been shouting it from the rooftops, boasting at endless press conferences and shoving it up the noses of Farage and Badenoch. Instead, it puts out a one-line on Facebook. Go figure!

MY NEW Year's wish is that Air Force One swoops into Downing Street and kidnaps Reeves, Starmer and the muppet Lammy and dumps them in the same New York prison cell as Venezuela's deposed president Nicolas Maduro and his wife Cilia Flores. They'd have lots to talk about – like how to turn a once great country into an economic basket case!

THERE'S been a big hoo-ha this week about a new study that claims people on fat jabs might have to be on them for life. So what? Isn't that better than them dying from obesity related illnesses like cancer, heart attacks, strokes, diabetes? Why are so many people hellbent on criticising not celebrating a drug that can shift weight quickly and removes the imminent danger of life-threatening diseases?

Millions of Brits are on drugs for life – statins, beta blockers, angina meds, high blood pressure meds and HRT. But no one's screaming about them. And if the NHS and the government is determined to label obesity as an illness (and they do) then they should be prepared to give people a drug that can cure the "illness" which is currently a national crisis and the biggest drain on our NHS.

I want to make clear I don't subscribe to the "obesity is an illness" mantra. People, no matter how much they kid themselves, get fat because they eat too much. And they should shift that by controlling what they put in their body.

I couldn't do that, so I bit the bullet and signed up to Mounjaro through a company called Juniper and I've been on it for 18 months. Am I scared to come off it – yes, a bit. But what terrified me more is piling the weight back on, losing the mobility I regained with my weight loss and getting heart disease which runs in my family (as does obesity).

But I digress, if a drug exists that can keep people slim in a country where obesity is killing them – AND the illnesses spawned by it are bankrupting the NHS – why shouldn't people take it for life? In fact, why shouldn't they be given it for free?

Currently 2.5 million people are taking fat jabs, most of whom pay privately. THAT is saving the NHS billions because fewer of us will have heart attacks, strokes and obesity-related cancers. How is that not a win-win? But still, there's so much snottiness about fat jabs. The whingers call it cheating. It isn't. It's taking steps to save your own life.

AS FOR the hysteria about the cost – how many billions has the diet industry made out of "slimming foods", diet shakes, low-cal this, low-fat that? They've been flogging us snake oil for years and calling it a "solution". The study also says that if people come off the jabs, they'll pile their weight back on in two years. Sorry, but evidence shows people on crash diets and strict eating regimes do exactly the same. Many pile it all back on – and more – within a year. What that means is those people haven't fundamentally changed their eating habits – so the pounds will pile back on. If Mounjaro wasn't a weight loss drug but a cure for cancer there'd be no snottiness.

But if these jabs can save lives in a country where 65% of people are overweight or obese – it feels like a crime not to use them.

IT'S COMMON ENOUGH, GWYNNIE

GWYNETH Paltrow says the vicious backlash from her "consciously uncoupling" break-up statement got her fired from a movie. Course it did. It sounded nuts.

She was breaking up with Coldplay's Chris Martin and trying to make it sound like it was something noble – not about two people who couldn't bear to be around each other anymore.

She says: "I understand why it was so personal for people. You only see that kind of reaction when it's personal."

No, Gwynnie, you see that kind of reaction when people think you're an up-yer-bum, flaky, woke snowflake who thinks the phrase "splitting up" is too common and wanted her break-up to sound a bit more elegant!

BROOKLYN Beckham was apparently so "overwhelmed" by his parents constantly tagging his social media posts that he "blocked" Posh and Becks online and instructed lawyers to send a letter banning them from contacting or tagging him.

Apparently, the final straw was when Victoria "liked" a roast chicken video he'd posted. OMG imagine the shock, the horror, the mental anguish of that – tipped over the edge by a roast chicken?

This dope is a warning of what happens when super-rich parents indulge and pander to their (thick) precocious children.

IT'S WINTER, it's January, so could everyone please stop talking about the snow and the cold weather like it's some unexpected natural disaster. Snow falls in winter…

But why, when councils everywhere have all but doubled our council tax, are they not using some of that cash to grit the roads?

A&E departments nationwide have been struggling to cope with ice-related accidents this week – many of them caused by ungritted roads and pavements.

So, where's all our money going – into council workers' pensions and pay packets?

STARMER and Reeves are about to make another humiliating U-turn – the Government's 12th since it came to power – this time over tax hikes for struggling pubs.

Yet again, it's too little too late. And it won't win them a single vote come the election because the damage has been done. No pensioner will ever vote for Labour again, neither will anyone in the hospitality industry or anyone with a business.

And I'm hoping this U-turn won't make landlords lift their pub ban on Labour MPs. That needs to stand!

DAWN OF A NEW DAY FOR TV STAR WE ONCE THOUGHT OF AS A NATIONAL TREASURE

IN A Radio Times interview, Dawn French says: "I accept I have a reputation as a trustworthy, cardigan-wearing, decent human."

Not anymore, she doesn't. Not after that vile, deranged Twitter video where she mocked the Israeli victims of the October 7 Hamas attack. Hasn't she realised yet that disgusting video shocked and appalled people? Doesn't she get we now see her for exactly the kind of person she is – the kind who, in a stupid, whiny voice, thought it was funny to mock the rape, torture and wholesale slaughter of teenage girls, young men, babies, mothers? What kind of human does that? I literally can't watch her in anything anymore – not even those M&S Christmas ads – because they literally turn my stomach. French used to be a national treasure. Now there's a name for her I can't print!

DAILY EXPRESSO DON'T MISS CAROLE MALONE EVERY WEDNESDAY ON OUR YOUTUBE CHANNEL'S DAILY EXPRESSO SHOW

‘Stop puberty blockers trial, kids are too young’

EXCLUSIVE

BY **KATIE HARRIS** Senior Political Correspondent

A SHADOW minister has called on the Health Secretary to halt a trial of puberty-blocking drugs involving young children.

Claire Coutinho, Shadow Minister for Equalities, today writes in the Daily Express asking Wes Streeting to stop the clinical trial involving 226 children, the youngest of whom is eight, due to start early this year.

Recalling herself at eight, Ms Coutinho says she dressed like eccentric TV entertainer Timmy Mallett and entertained childish dreams such as fighting witches.

She writes: “Despite the Health Secretary saying he is uncomfortable with the trial, the Labour government is pushing ahead with it.

Darkest

“These drugs put children on a path to lifelong infertility. Almost all will go on to take opposite-sex hormones and need medical treatment for the rest of their lives.

“This is nothing less than the state-sanctioned chemical castration of children and it will come to be seen as one of the darkest acts of this government. This trial is open to children still in primary school.”

The trial was recommended by the Cass Review into children’s gender care, which concluded that the quality of research on the benefits of puberty blockers for youngsters with gender dysphoria is poor.

The medication, which is used to delay puberty, has been banned for under-18s since December 2024 following the review. Critics including Harry Potter author JK Rowling have raised concerns over the harm the study could pose to youngsters.

Conservative leader Kemi Badenoch and Reform UK leader Nigel Farage have both called for the trial to be axed. Dozens of cross-party MPs signed a letter against it.

The Health Secretary last month admitted the decision on the trial was a difficult one.

Mr Streeting told MPs on the Health and Social Care Committee: “I’ve had to weigh up risk of harm to children and young people, which is why it’s not straightforward, why I’ve leant on clinical advice from people far more qualified than us.” He added that he was uncomfortable with the trial but also with the ban on puberty blockers.

The Department of Health and Social Care said: “The expert Cass Review – which was accepted by the last government and this one – recommended a ban on puberty blockers for gender incongruence and that clinical research be carried out to address a lack of scientific evidence.

“This trial will help provide the evidence that is currently lacking. Its approval came only after extremely rigorous safety checks and with multiple safeguards in place to protect young people’s wellbeing – including clinical and parental approval.”

A young Claire Coutinho loved Timmy Mallett’s look

COMMENT

CLAIRE COUTINHO

Shadow Minister for Equalities

DO YOU remember what you were like as an eight-year-old? I dressed like Timmy Mallett, had big rainbow glasses, and dreamed of fighting witches.

If you had asked me whether I consented to giving up my ability to have children or a sex life, I would have had no idea what that meant.

But in just a few weeks over 200 children struggling with their biological sex, some as young as eight, will be asked to take powerful puberty blocking drugs as part of a clinical trial.

These drugs put children on a path to lifelong infertility. Almost all will go on to take opposite-sex hormones and need medical treatment for the rest of their lives. Despite the Health Secretary saying he is uncomfortable with the trial, the Labour government is pushing ahead with it regardless.

This is nothing less than state-sanctioned chemical castration of children. Studies show the vast majority of children who question their biological sex no longer feel that way once they are through adolescence.

Many grow up to realise they are simply gay. Giving them puberty blocker drugs is not the answer.

No one thinks the same way at eight as when they are 18 – and whatever they wish to do as an adult is not a decision for when they are a child.

The government must not allow healthy children to be sterilised in this way. They need to stop the Streeting trial now.

British Gas
British Gas
British Gas
When the cold arrives, so do we.

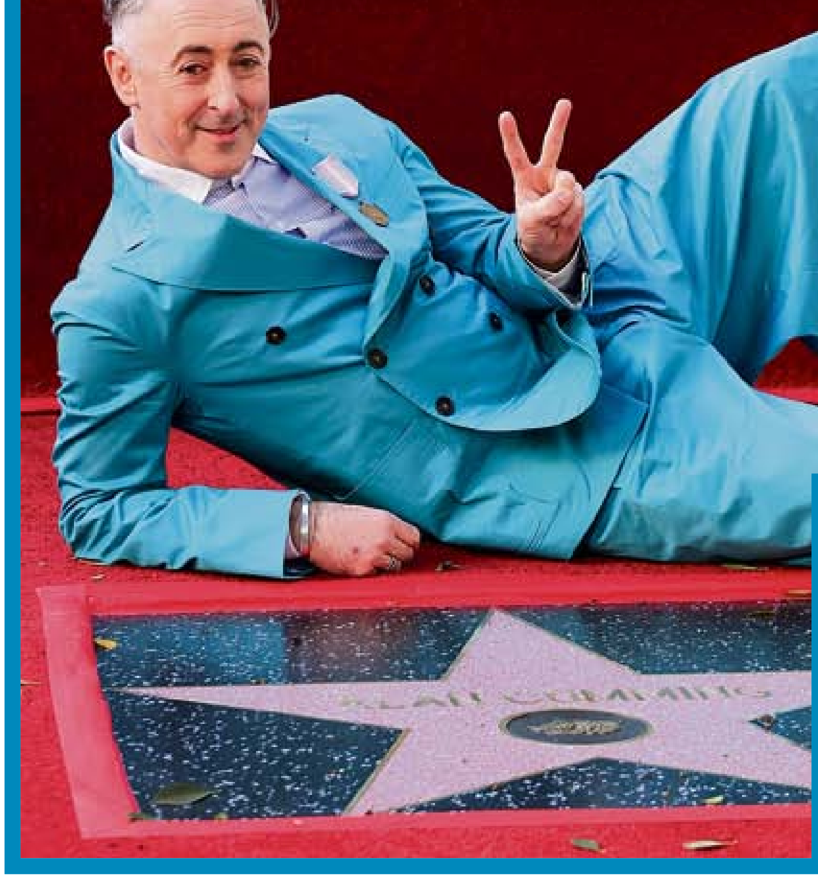
No heating or hot water? We reach 80% of people the same day when they contact us by 11am.

Search British Gas same day call-outs.

Based on 2025 performance data, 80% of customers with no heating or hot water who contacted us before 11am received same day call-outs.

Pictures: MAYA DEHLIN SPACH/VARIETY

Star moment for Alan on the talk of fame...



By **Frances Millar**

ALAN Cumming has been honoured with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, celebrating a decades-long career across stage and screen.

The Tony and Olivier-winning Scottish actor, 60, was saluted at a ceremony on Hollywood Boulevard by close pal Monica Lewinsky and fellow Scottish actor Brian Cox.

In a speech, Alan, from Aberfeldy, Perthshire, poked fun at his former teacher at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama. "I'd like to thank my acting teacher who told me, when I was 19, that I'd never make it as a professional actor. And I'd like to say, 'Who is on top and who is on bottom now?''' Alan's US career has spanned Goldeneye, Romy and Michele's High School Reunion, the X-Men series – and he now hosts the US version of The Traitors.

Monica Lewinsky, Alan Cumming and Brian Cox

Dithering lords told to hurry to save dying bill

Slow progress on 1,000 amendments

BY **MARTYN BROWN**
Political Editor

PEERS have been urged to speed up debating assisted dying, amid fears the legislation may run out of time.

Lord Falconer, sponsoring the bill in the Lords, said scrutiny will be incomplete "at the rate we're going".

His warning came before the House reconvened yesterday to continue its line-by-line scrutiny of the Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill.

A call for more debating time was backed by the Lords without a vote, and they will now decide how much extra time to schedule.

Those opposed to legalised assisted dying have been accused of obstructing the bill to sabotage its progress. Critics of the proposal want major changes and claim the legislation is unsafe.

EXPRESS CRUSADE GIVE US OUR LAST RIGHTS

The Commons and the Lords must agree on the final draft before spring, when this session of Parliament ends – and peers still have lots to debate.

Former Labour Cabinet minister Lord Falconer, who tabled the extra time motion, said more than 1,000 amendments have been tabled.

Peers have so far spent 32 hours scrutinising the bill, and a further 50 hours are scheduled.

He added that in four committee days one eighth of the changes have been considered: "If we continue at the rate we are going, this House will fail to complete the process. We will reach no conclusions as to how the bill should be amended or whether it should return to the Commons.

"Instead, the bill will fail through lack of time...despite the fact that it came to this House in June of last year after extensive scrutiny in the Commons and received in this House an unopposed second reading."

Peers' debates of the bill may cost taxpayers nearly £2million. If current attendances stay the same, with a similar proportion of peers claiming the maximum daily allowance of £371, the 16 days allocated will run up a cost of £1.95m.

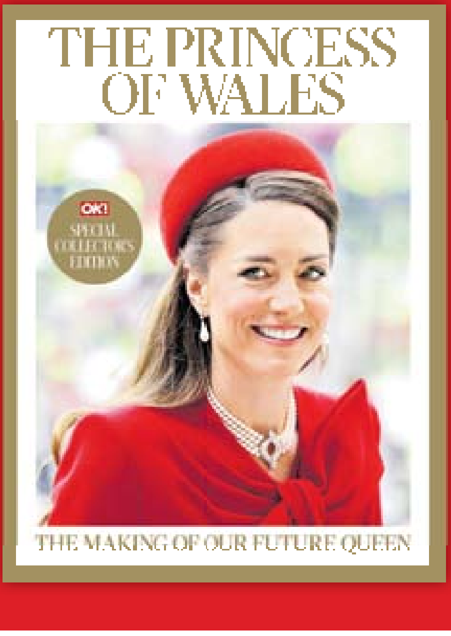
Labour MP Kim Leadbeater's bill – backed by the Express crusade Give Us Our Last Rights – would allow terminally ill adults in England and Wales with less than six months to live to apply for an assisted death, subject to approval by experts.

TV icon and bill campaigner Dame Esther Rantzen has warned that "scrutiny must not tip into sabotage".

OPINION: PAGE 14

£15
ROLLBACK
£9.98
Grey Spin Mop
£15
ROLLBACK
£9.98
Purple Steam Iron 2400 Watts
THAT'S HOW WE
ROLLBACK
Savings on home essentials in store and online
£16
ROLLBACK
£9.94
Addis 3 Tier Airer
£40
ROLLBACK
£25
Black Goblin Cylinder Vacuum
THAT'S ASDA PRICE

In Store | Delivery | Click & Collect Selected stores and lines. Subject to availability. Black Goblin Cylinder Vacuum, was £40 now £25. Purple Steam Iron 2400 Watts, was £15 now £9.98. Grey Spin Mop, was £15 now £9.98. Addis 3 Tier Airer, was £16 now £9.94. Delivery, collection and minimum basket charges may apply. UK delivery only. May exclude Asda Express and small stores, see ASDA.com/smallstores



ON SALE NOW

AVAILABLE AT
ok.co.uk/futurequeen
Online purchase price excludes P&P. See website for details.

THE PRINCESS OF WALES
OK! SPECIAL COLLECTOR'S EDITION
THE MAKING OF OUR FUTURE QUEEN

WINTER'S HERE.
IT'S OK,
SO ARE WE.

40% off breakdown packages with the UK's fastest major breakdown provider

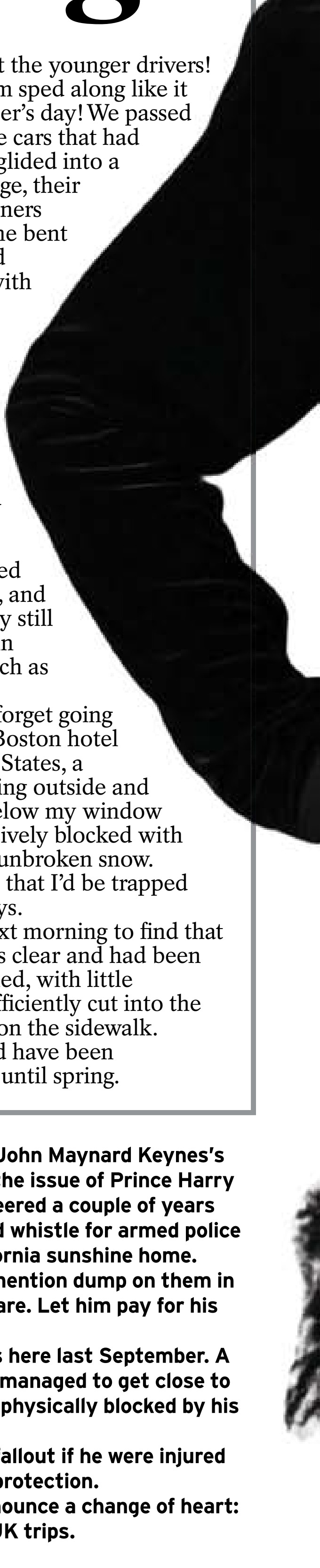
Online exclusive
Ends 29 January
theAA.com

AA Always Ahead

UK's fastest major service: Quicker arrival time vs. all other major breakdown providers (AA: 62.4% vs. Greenflag: 59% & RAC 48.1% of breakdowns reached in under 1 hr). Source: WhatCar independent survey June 2025 (c.3,300 respondents - required breakdown assistance). 40% off breakdown cover packages is only available when you take out a new membership with At Home, National Recovery or Onward Travel ontheAA.com The sale starts on 10 January 2026 and ends at 11.59 pm on 29 January 2026. This introductory offer: (1) is only available online attheAA.com; (2) is for new AA breakdown customers only who are UK residents, and not existing AA breakdown members or at renewal; (3) applies to the first year of your membership for annual customers only; for monthly membership, prices may change at any time with 45 days' notice; (4) does not apply when only Roadside Assistance is purchased, or to Parts & Garage Cover, or to Key Cover, or to Commercial Use, or to Tyre Cover; (5) is not available in conjunction with any other offer, discount or promotion or in a breakdown situation; and (6) is not valid and prices are subject to change if you hold your Breakdown membership in relation to a vehicle used for commercial purposes (without purchasing Commercial Use), or if you are in material breach of any other terms of your Roadside Assistance policy; (7) there's no cash alternative, and the AA reserves the right to withdraw or alter this promotion without prior notice at any time. All information correct at time of print January 2026.

I can fix your EV
theAA.com
999 AA

Chill... it is winter not the ice age



J THERE'S a whole generation of us – maybe even two, actually – who will have been smiling at all the fuss and bother generated by last week's cold snap.

Because for those of us old enough to remember the bitter winters of the Fifties, Sixties and Seventies, that's all it was – a cold snap. Quite a lot of snow for Scotland – which used to be something you could rely on (like Scotland's previously-guaranteed ski slopes) and a smattering for the rest of us. Yawn. Nothing to see here.

But for a good half of the population – the younger half – the last few days have been akin to the onset of a new ice age. They're just not used to it. They don't know how to cope. This was particularly – and dangerously – apparent to my husband and I last weekend, spent in the snowy Cotswolds on a New Year break.

The rural side roads were frozen over like any ice-rink. Passable, but with extreme care.

My Manchester-born father taught me how to drive on icy roads a lifetime ago: "Dead-slow, and use the engine and gearbox to slow down. Try not to touch the brakes if you can help it".

Richard's dad told him the same half a century ago, when long, cold, snowy winters were the norm. So we were both pretty unfazed by the slippery surfaces.

Stick to 10mph and keep your distance from the car in front. Simples. But the younger drivers! Most of them sped along like it was a summer's day! We passed at least three cars that had slewed and glided into a ditch or hedge, their youthful owners peering at the bent and battered bodywork with puzzled expressions.

But you can't really blame them. They just haven't experienced the kinds of winters we once accepted as the norm, and the kind they still experience in countries such as America.

I'll never forget going to bed in a Boston hotel room in the States, a blizzard raging outside and the street below my window comprehensively blocked with four feet of unbroken snow.

I assumed that I'd be trapped there for days.

I woke next morning to find that the road was clear and had been snowploughed, with little walkways efficiently cut into the snowbanks on the sidewalk.

Here, we'd have been snowbound until spring.

R **"WHEN the facts change, I change my mind." John Maynard Keynes's pithy observation was definitely applicable to the issue of Prince Harry and his UK security this week. Most people cheered a couple of years back when Harry was bluntly told that he could whistle for armed police protection, when he deigned to visit us from his California sunshine home.**

He'd been the one to quit the Royal Family, not to mention dump on them in that Oprah interview and his self-serving memoir, Spare. Let him pay for his own security. He could afford it.

But then came those stalker incidents when he was here last September. A woman who'd previously made explicit threats online managed to get close to Harry not once but twice, the second time only being physically blocked by his private security guard.

Like it or not, Harry is the King's son. Imagine the fallout if he were injured – or worse – on British soil because of a lack of state protection.

Now the Home Office is reported to be ready to announce a change of heart: Harry will get armed cops to guard him on all future UK trips.

Good. The facts changed. Change the policy.

Richard&Judy

BRITAIN'S BEST-LOVED HUSBAND AND WIFE TEAM REFLECT ON THE WEEK'S EVENTS EVERY SATURDAY IN YOUR DAILY EXPRESS

J RUMOURS leak almost daily from ITV headquarters that Blind Date is going to make a comeback this year. But who could possibly be the new Cilla? Step forward our old friend Emily Atack (we've known her since she was a baby), star of Rivals, The Inbetweeners and a few other TV series, more hits than you can shake a stick at. Glam Em, above, is being hotly tipped to host the relaunched Saturday night show. She has family connections to Cilla, too – her mum, entertainer Kate Robbins, actually wrote the theme tune to Cilla's other TV hit, Surprise, Surprise, and also provided Cilla's voice on the puppet series Spitting Image. It's written in the stars for our Em!

Killing time until new world order

R HONEST question to you all. I know you'll give an honest answer. If you had woken this morning to the breaking news that last night, British special forces had made a series of daring and targeted raids on the French channel coast, seizing dozens of people smugglers and helicoptering them in handcuffs back here to the UK for trial, what would you think? Would you cheer the news that the trafficking gangs had at last been "smashed"? Or would you side with statements of outrage from a predictably furious French government and appalled EU?

Honest answer? I'm betting most of you would cheer. Loudly.

Which is not to say the action would have been lawful, or even reasonable. And to be clear, I'm not proposing the SAS launch a night strike on the Pas-de-Calais. That's not the point of the question. The question is aimed at revealing how much, and how fast, times are changing.

Donald Trump's decision to have done with jaw-jaw and move decisively to war-war, delivering a blistering night attack on Venezuela's main military sites and abducting its gangster president and his wife, has comprehensively ushered in a new era in international affairs.

My little French scenario may not be entirely the stuff of fantasy. If Trump-buddy Nigel Farage were to become our next elected Prime Minister, it's becoming perfectly possible to envisage him authorising such executive military action.

Sixty years ago, Robert F Kennedy famously quoted the so-called Chinese curse, "May you live in interesting times". With scant weeks remaining before his assassination, Kennedy added: "Like it or not, we certainly do live in interesting times."

And like it or not, we most certainly live in them now.

The world order, so relatively stable and unchanging since the end of the Second World War, is dissolving, literally as I write.

You can practically see the page of history turning, can't you? It's been a long time coming. World orders, seemingly everlasting and immutable in their day, never, ever last. Empires come and go. Treaties wither. Solemn agreements decay. International policing agencies fail – the League of Nations couldn't stop the Second World War; today, the UN and Nato suddenly look fragile and close to their sell-by date.

The previously unthinkable becomes possible. Take Trump's threat to annexe Greenland, by military force if necessary.

And his threats to do something similar with Canada. Would anyone have given either prospect a moment's serious consideration even two years ago?

Now both are the stuff of front-page headlines around the world and panicked phone calls between heads of state.

Interesting times, indeed.

Trump-buddy Nigel Farage has longstanding close ties to the US President

R **BLOKES – banter is better than being bathetic. For us men, anyway. Male failure to "open up" about innermost feelings is almost automatically judged to be harmful, but guess what? It's actually quite good for us. Our instincts to belt up and keep a stiff upper lip – maybe loosened by a few irreverent jokes – is actually better for us.**

I always knew this, instinctively, didn't you? Even before a groundbreaking study, published this week, that showed men going through a tough time actually cope better if their mates tease and even jokingly insult them about it. Bants ain't pants.

BRIGITTE DELIVERS COUP DE GRÂCE TO CRUEL KEYBOARD WARRIORS

French First Lady won her battle

J **I AM so glad that Brigitte Macron's tormentors have been found guilty of tormenting her (tormenting her to near distraction, according to her lovely daughter, Tiphaine) by a Paris court.**

I'm only sorry that Brigitte's despicable 10 online abusers didn't go directly to jail.

They received suspended prison sentences of up to eight months this week for "degrading and insulting" comments about the wife of the French President Emmanuel Macron.

They repeatedly asserted that she was born a man and insinuated that the Macrons' 24-year age gap had links to paedophilia.

Online abusers almost always get away with it. Usually because they hide behind the cloak of digital anonymity with absurd "handles" or straightforwardly fake names.

But Brigitte refused to take their cruel nonsense lying down.

She fought back – and won.

Her bullies were nailed, publicly named and shamed, and if they try anything like it again, it'll be a case of: CLANG! "Put the lights on!"

Happy New Year, Brigitte.

BROADCASTER'S

Adverts on Auntie? That's replace licence fee if BBC

SATURDAY'S BIG READ

JONATHAN WALKER

Whitehall Editor

IT'S A record that will never be broken. A remarkable 28 million people tuned in to watch special guest Elton John join comedy geniuses Morecambe and Wise for their 1977 Christmas special on BBC One, making it the most-watched funny show of all time.

That was back when families across the nation gathered around the television to enjoy big favourites together. Today, many of us prefer the screen of a personal phone or tablet, where we choose our own entertainment from what feels like an infinite selection.

It makes the television licence fee something of an anachronism.

If you watch any television at all, even if that never includes the BBC, you're expected by law to pay £174.50 per household to fund the broadcaster. There's a fine of £1,000 if you refuse.

Culture Secretary Lisa Nandy faces a dilemma. The BBC's Royal Charter expires in December 2027 and she has the task of drawing up a new one (otherwise, the broadcaster officially ceases to exist).

It means she has to decide what happens to the licence fee.

Scandals

And this includes whether new sources of income are needed.

That's why Ms Nandy is considering drastic changes to the way the BBC is funded, including the option of showing adverts during BBC broadcasts for the first time.

There were only three TV channels in the 1970s, but today there are hundreds. That's in addition to streaming services such as Netflix and video-sharing options including YouTube and TikTok.

Anyone who watches TV, however, pays the same licence fee, whether they use BBC services or not. And the official definition of "television" is surprisingly broad.

You're supposed to buy a licence if you use a smartphone to watch certain services on Amazon Prime, for example, or YouTube, even if you don't have a TV set.

This can't continue. The fee brings in £3.8billion every year but it's easy to understand why fewer households are paying – down from 26.2 million in 2017-18 to 23.8 million today.

Two-thirds of households subscribe to online paid-for services such as Netflix, Disney+ or Apple TV. It's hard to justify forcing them to pay for something else they may not want. We're spending less time in front of the goggle box than we used to. Data from regulator Ofcom shows average viewing time fell 4% in 2024 compared with 2023.

Young people are particularly uninterested. Those aged 55 to 64 spend an average of 218 minutes every day watching TV (this includes online services from broadcasters such as BBC iPlayer or ITVX). For those aged 16 to 24, it's just 31 minutes, Ofcom figures show, far less than the time they spend on video-sharing services such as TikTok.

A new Royal Charter comes into force in January 2028 and will last at least 10 years, by which time much of the TikTok generation will be in their 30s. Should they be forced to pay for a service just because their grandparents did?

The BBC hasn't helped itself. One of its strengths is news and current affairs, but in recent years it was rocked by scandals including the Huw Edwards affair, which saw the ex-presenter convicted of making indecent images of children.

The corporation is hunting for a new boss after a huge row over bias. Director-general Tim Davie quit when it emerged flagship current affairs show Panorama had edited a Donald Trump speech to misrepresent the US president's words. Complaints about BBC news bias are not new and Margaret Thatcher objected to its reporting of the Falklands conflict in the 1980s. But the difference with the latest allegations is that they are demonstrably true.

They also came at the worst possible time, with the government's Charter review getting under way.

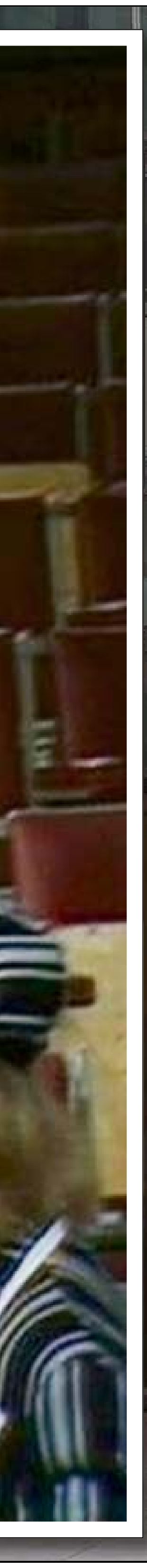
If you want to share your thoughts with Ms Nandy, you have until March 10 to take part in the consultation. But she has already

TV LICENSING
www.tvlicensing.co.uk
Your new TV Licence

Morecambe and Wise with Elton John in their iconic record-breaking 1977 Christmas special

just one of the options to is to move with the times

Picture: PETER MACDIARMID/GETTY



BBC
NETFLIX
prime video
tv
Disney+
YouTube

Broadcaster is at a critical juncture as it tries to compete with online subscription services, right

Lisa Nandy is consulting public

set out the options she is considering. Perhaps the most dramatic involves allowing the BBC to carry advertising "on all of its services" in the same way as other commercial rivals. The government paper notes: "This funding model supports other public service media providers such as ITV, Channel 4 and 5."

There is a less controversial proposal to put BBC programmes on YouTube, accompanied by adverts but keep the broadcaster's own channels ad-free.

Ms Nandy is also considering charging different fees depending on the services you use, such as watching traditional TV or sticking to online services such as iPlayer.

And the BBC could follow Netflix and offer a subscription.

For example, recent shows could remain on iPlayer while a separate paid-for online service offers programmes from the archive.

The aim is to give the BBC the funding it needs to survive and to invest in technology such as artificial intelligence.

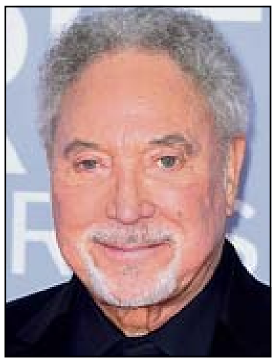
But abolishing the licence altogether doesn't appear to be an option. The government says it is open to "reforming the fee alongside broader reform options". And while promising "the lowest possible cost for households" it suggests the cost could "change". It hasn't promised the fee will be reduced.

Ms Nandy has also ruled out bringing back the free scheme for those aged 75 after it was axed in 2020, although over-75s receiving pension credit are still eligible.

It's a cop-out that could damage the BBC in the long run. Labour doesn't want to go down in history for killing a British institution.

But a compulsory licence will appear increasingly bizarre.

Tom Jones warns fans against fake online impersonator scam



Sir Tom Jones issues alert

BY **CARLA FERIC**

SIR Tom Jones has warned fans on social media of a scam involving fake online profiles impersonating him.

The Delilah singer, 85, advised his followers not to interact with the fake accounts, saying they are run by fraudsters "attempting to trap and abuse vulnerable people".

It comes after reports of people being scammed out of thousands of pounds by fake online profiles pretending to be the Welsh star.

A post on Instagram from his management team said: "Regrettably, it has come to our attention there are many fake online profiles impersonating Sir Tom Jones and/or his team, who are attempting to scam fans and members of the public.

"Sir Tom DOES NOT personally or directly communicate to individuals via his social channels.

"If a fake profile tries to chat to you privately, report and block them. This will NOT be Sir Tom Jones or his team.

"It is sad and disheartening to hear of these scammers attempting to trap and abuse vulnerable people."

FREE £2 SHOP BET

WITH William HILL

VALID ON ALL SPORT

The FA Cup third round has produced many memorable moments throughout the years. What magic will today's cup ties produce?

Before your pick of the action kicks off, visit any William Hill shop and claim this £2 free bet.

Here are some of today's highlights:

■ FA Cup third round: Highlights include non-league Macclesfield against holders Crystal Palace (12:15pm), Spurs against Aston Villa (5:45pm) and a London derby for Liam Rosenior's first game as Chelsea boss away at Charlton (8pm).

■ AFCON: It's quarter-final time at the Africa Cup of Nations, where Mohamed Salah's Egypt face holders Ivory Coast at 7pm.

■ Racing: With freezing conditions across the country, today's all-weather racing comes from Lingfield and Newcastle.

■ Masters snooker: Tomorrow sees Shaun Murphy start his title defence against Wu Yize. While UK Championship winner Mark Selby is the star of the evening session.

Ready to claim your free bet? Head to your local William Hill, where you'll also find other great offers.

HOW TO CLAIM

Cut out the voucher and present at the counter of your local **William Hill** shop when placing your **£2 free** bet on **Saturday January 10, 2026.**
18+ only, please read the voucher terms and conditions before redemption.

FREE £2 BET IN William HILL SHOPS

Valid on any sport until shop close on Saturday January 10, 2026.

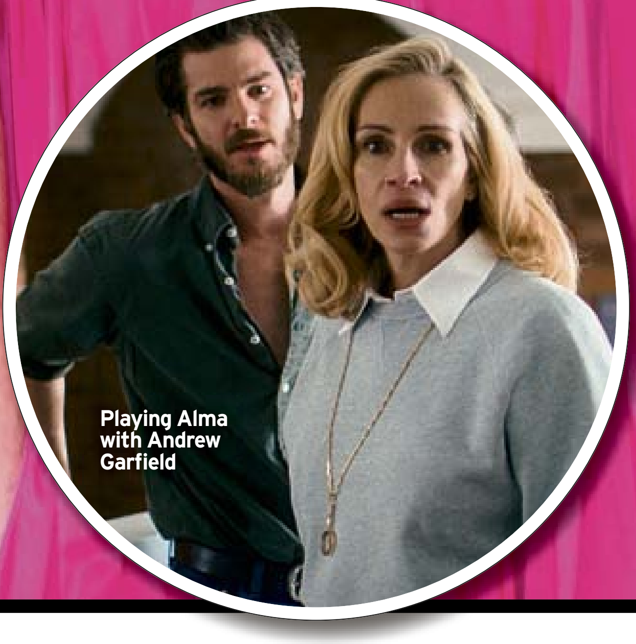
To reader: Simply cut out this voucher and take it into any William Hill shop before close on Saturday January 10, 2026 to claim your £2 free bet on any sport.

Terms and conditions: £2 free bet must be used over-the-counter on any sport in a William Hill shop before close on Saturday January 10, 2026. One free bet per customer. This free bet is non-transferable and cannot be redeemed for cash. If the free bet is partially redeemed, no change or additional free bets will be awarded. No payment will be made in respect of void bets. £2 free bet stake will not be included in any returns. Offer not valid for online or telephone betting. No photocopies accepted. Employees or agents of William Hill or Reach PLC, their family members or anyone else connected with the promotion may not use this free bet voucher. William Hill Fair Deal Rules apply. Over 18s only.

Promoter: William Hill Organization Limited, 1 Bedford Avenue, London WC1B 3AU. William Hill is licensed by the Gambling Commission. Reach is not licensed by the Gambling Commission and is not liable for any losses that arise out of this promotion including but not limited to attempted redemption of this voucher. For advice, visit begambleaware.org

TAKE TIME TO THINK
taketimetothink.co.uk

The star is up for a 4th Golden Globe



Playing Alma with Andrew Garfield

When we finished Pretty Woman, we all thought we'd had the best fun on the worst film!

BY **JENNY DAVIS**

WHEN the Golden Globes ceremony takes place tomorrow, all eyes will once again be on Julia Roberts. A veteran of the silver screen with some 70 films under her belt, she is up for best actress against Jessie Buckley, Jennifer Lawrence, Tessa Thompson, Eva Victor and Renate Reinsve.

The nomination is for her role in psychological thriller After the Hunt, in which Julia stars as Yale professor Alma Imhoff, who is pushed to the limit when a student makes a shock allegation against one of her colleagues.

It is a performance for which the 58-year-old mum of three is also being tipped as an Oscar nominee – 25 years after she won her first Academy Award for Erin Brockovich, in 2001.

Many still remember the actress most as Vivian in Pretty Woman, the movie that propelled her to stardom 35 years ago.

Incredibly, she and her castmate Richard Gere, 76, feared the film about a romance between a billionaire and an escort would bomb. Julia says: "We didn't know what we were doing.

"I'd sort of say to Richard, 'What are we doing?' He goes, 'I don't know'." On set, director Garry Marshall would simply instruct Julia to be funny.

She says, "I was like, 'OK, so a man walks into a bar…' We were really shooting from the hip for sure."

With a flash of her famous smile, she adds: "When we finished, we all kind of thought, 'We just had the most fun making the worst movie in Hollywood'."

The crew were so sure the film would flop they held secret meetings about breaking it to Garry. "They truly had a lunch to talk about how to let him down that this movie was such a steaming piece of s**t," Julia reveals.

However, Pretty Woman defied all expectations and turned Julia into a huge star. She won a Golden Globe for it in the early 90s (she has three so far) and was nominated for an Oscar.

The 1999 romcom Notting Hill, with Hugh Grant, was another high point.

Julia still remembers the immense pride she felt when the film took on Star Wars: Episode 1 – The Phantom Menace at the box office.

"At the time, I was like, 'Why on earth would we release this movie with a Star Wars movie?' " she recalls. "I'm sure the Star Wars movie was incredible. But there was a full page in The New York Times that said, 'The Force is With Julia'. And I was just… you couldn't talk to me all day. I was so puffed up. I was so full of myself for 24 hours."

Julia married cinematographer Daniel Moder in 2002 and they have three children: 21-year-old twins Hazel and Phinnaeus and son Henry, 18.

Her star status was further cemented when she teamed up with Brad Pitt, George Clooney and Matt Damon in the Ocean's Eleven franchise. "Those boys are as fun as you imagine they would be," she says. "The amount of pranks that were played on me!"

They blocked the exit to her Vegas hotel room with a giant plant and drew a smiley face on the door in shaving foam. "They thought it was hysterical," she says. "But don't worry, I got them back, one by one."

Hollywood success has brought her a long way from the time when she could not afford to go to college. "It was not financially feasible for our family," Julia says.

Instead, after school she moved to New York, where she shared a flat with her sister for years.

Acting wasn't on her mind. "I got a job at a shoe store and was as happy as could be," she says. "It was never, 'I'm going to move to New York and I'm going to break this town'. That was never in my consciousness." After the Hunt, out now on Amazon Prime, is one of her toughest projects to date. One challenge was when her character is slapped round the face by co-star Ayo Edebiri, who plays student Maggie.

Julia says: "I was feeling bad for her. Nobody wants to be slapped. My mother, may she rest in peace, was an all-time slapper. That was her kind of go-to move, not in an abusive way but just to get your attention. I said to Ayo, 'You just have to slap me, it's what's called for. Don't be scared, don't hold back, we will survive, it will be fine'."

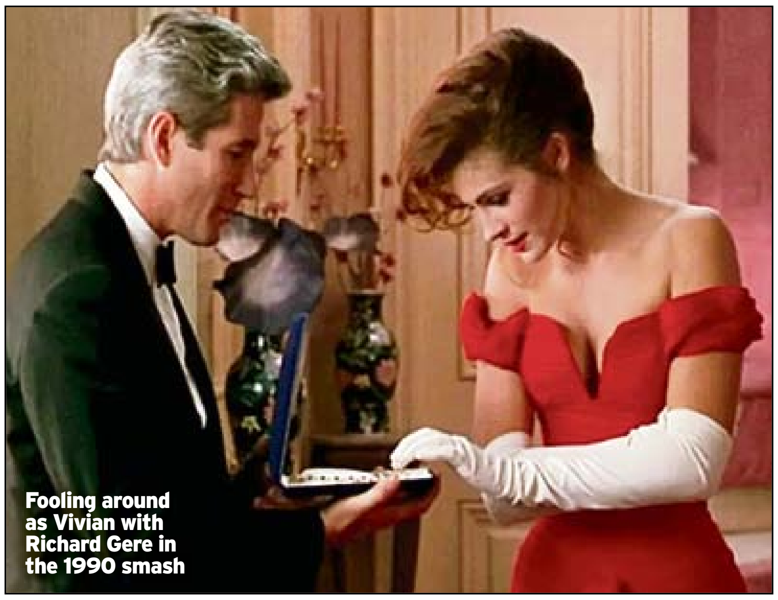
There was also an anxiety-inducing moment with co-star and former Spider-Man Andrew Garfield – in what she dubs a "throw-up scene".

She says: "I realise that on paper I'm a grown woman, but in a room with a man close to me that is not my husband I'm a 12-year-old."

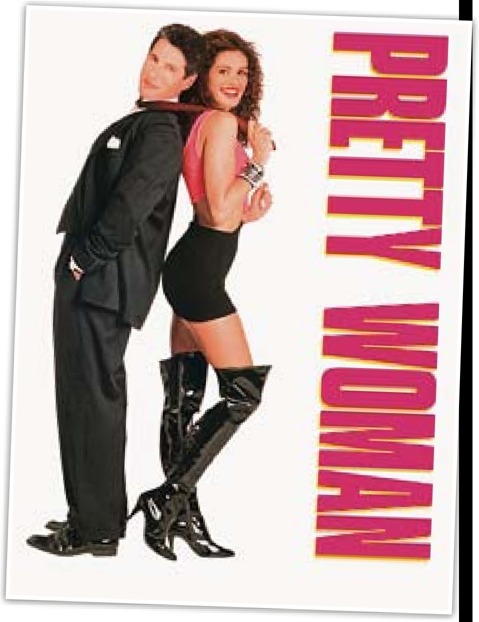
Now that her kids have flown the nest Julia is feeling the compulsion to go back to theatre. But while that may mean fewer Julia Roberts films in future, she believes quality matters more than quantity.

She adds: "I think we only have a certain number of destined performances inside of us, and I kind of keep joking and saying, 'I maybe have three and a half movies left in me'.

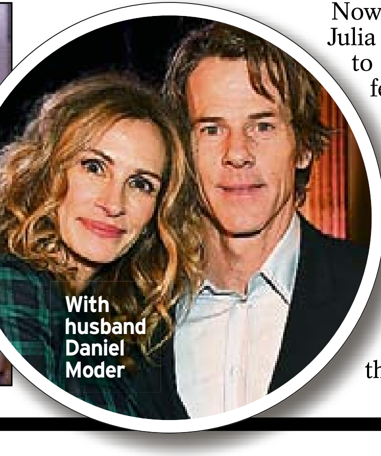
"And whatever they are, I feel they will find me and I want them to be these beautiful experiences."


Fooling around as Vivian with Richard Gere in the 1990 smash

Actress Julia Roberts reflects on her stellar 35-year career



Fighting for the truth as mum Erin Brockovich, left, and falling for Hugh Grant in Notting Hill


With husband Daniel Moder

FREE FAMILY DAY PASS

National Trust

Looking for the perfect antidote to the January blues? Whether you love peaceful woodland walks, windswept coastal vistas, or immersing yourself in history and culture, the National Trust has something for everyone.

Thanks to this incredible offer, you can enjoy a FREE visit to a National Trust property of your choice, worth up to £50. The pass allows entry for up to 2 adults and 3 children, or 1 adult and 4 children, giving you the perfect excuse to gather your loved ones and explore the great outdoors. This offer is valid at National Trust locations across England, Wales, and Northern Ireland until March 6, 2026. Please note that some properties are excluded, scan the QR code below to check participating places.

Start your year by reconnecting with nature, exploring heritage and making unforgettable memories with family and friends. Don't miss out on this wonderful opportunity to experience the beauty of National Trust sites – completely free!

WHERE CAN YOU VISIT?

Scan the QR code opposite to check participating places, plan your days and book if required!

Scan Me

WORTH UP TO £50

©National Trust Images/James Dobson

HOW TO CLAIM

Cut out the voucher below and present at your chosen National Trust location by March 6, 2026 inclusive. Some National Trust properties require advance booking, please check the property website for full details. Certain places are excluded from this promotion, details can be found at **www.reachforms.co.uk/nationaltrust**

FREE National Trust FAMILY PASS

VALID UNTIL FRIDAY 6 MARCH, 2026

What's included? Your pass covers standard admission, but doesn't include parking, transport or events, unless these are included within standard admission. Please note that where National Trust members are asked to pay, this will apply to you too. Passes cannot be used for group admission.

When can you visit? Use this pass once before Friday 6 March 2026 during advertised opening hours.

Who can visit? – A total of 2 adults and 3 children, or 1 adult and 4 children, can use this pass (children not essential). Children are aged 5-17 inclusive. Under 5s visit free and don't count in the total.

Where can you visit? – Only certain places can accept this pass. Scan the QR code on the full page above or visit **nationaltrust.org.uk/using-your-pass** to check participating places, plan your day and book if required. If you need to pre-book the place you wish to visit, select an 'Affiliate organisation member or pass holder' ticket (note – not a paid ticket). Your pass is required as well as your booking confirmation.

Passholders who cannot present the pass, or visit a non-participating place, will be charged the full admission price. You can't sell or share the pass, and only one pass is allowed per household. Full Ts&Cs can be found at **www.reachforms.co.uk/nationaltrust**

©National Trust Images/Paul Harris

DONATE TO THE NATIONAL TRUST'S PLANT A TREE APPEAL

The National Trust is a charity that cares for nature, beauty and history across England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Trees are essential for life. They clean the air we breathe, lock up carbon as they grow and provide homes for wildlife.

Donate to the National Trust's Plant a Tree Appeal today and help plant and establish 20 million trees by 2030, benefiting wildlife, people and the climate for years to come. You can dedicate your donation to a loved one either in memory or as a gift and get a customisable certificate to share with them.

To make your donation you can visit **www.nationaltrust.org.uk/plant-a-tree-now** or scan the QR code here.

One hundred per cent of your donation will go towards the planting and maintenance of new trees at National Trust places. This can include the cost of the trees, tree guards, stakes, tools and mulch. The cost of the trees differs according to the size and species, and trees are chosen according to what is in keeping with the area and what will benefit local wildlife at that location. National Trust registered charity number 205846.

Registered with FUNDRAISING REGULATOR

SCAN ME

Terry Yorath and Gabby Logan

My kind dad the warrior, says Gabby

BY **HANNAH ROBERTS**

SPORTS broadcaster Gabby Logan described her father Terry Yorath as "a kind-hearted and generous man" with a "wicked sense of humour" following his death aged 75.

She paid tribute to the former footballer in a post on Instagram, revealing their last conversation in hospital was about "whether roast potatoes were better with calves liver than mash potatoes".

Gabby, 52, added: "We knew he had limited time, but it is still a shock. Thank you for your messages of love and support, it has meant the world to us.

"Our Dad, a warrior on the football pitch, a kind-hearted and generous man off it, would have hated all the attention. (Well, most of it). The stories shared by strangers have been enormously comforting."

Cardiff-born Terry played in midfield for Leeds and captained Wales. Gabby, who made an abrupt exit midway through presenting BBC's Match of the Day on Wednesday due to a "family emergency", said he would now be "reunited" with her brother Daniel, who died aged 15 in 1992 from a genetic heart condition.

Punam smiling again after her cancer tears

BY **CASEY COOPER-FISKE**

ON-the-mend TV doctor Punam Krishan beams again after admitting she wept all the time following her breast cancer diagnosis.

The 42-year-old GP, known for her appearances on the BBC's Morning Live, said on the programme she is "still navigating" life after getting the shock news five months ago, which she announced on Sunday.

Speaking on yesterday's episode of the BBC One show, the former Strictly star said: "I cried a lot, I cried in the car, I cried in bed, cried in the shower.

"My dog was the best thing ever because he got me up and out every day, and we went for walks, and I just had this insane connection to nature, and all you do is just take the next step, and that's all."

Punam said in an Instagram post that she has completed treatment and is now healing.

She added: "I don't know how long this journey is but I think that it has definitely given me an insight like never before of just what it looks like to live it.

"Having been on the other side of the consultation table, I'm looking forward to just getting back to really holding my patients again with a newfound, 'I get it, I get it'. I've had the most extraordinary breast care team and nurse, which is such a blessing."

Dr Punam Krishan in hospital bed, on Strictly in 2024, and at her job

---

Littler's large pay day with £20m darts deal

Teenage champ's record-breaking sponsorship

BY **PHIL CARDY**

WORLD champion darts ace Luke Littler has hit the bullseye with a record-breaking £20million sponsorship deal.

Luke The Nuke, 18, who won £1m by retaining the world PDC title at London's Alexandra Palace last Saturday, has renewed his contract with Target Darts.

With earnings and bonuses, it could be worth £20m over 10 years, the most lucrative the sport has ever known.

Luke will also take a percentage from sales of products and equipment.

His branded darts set and magnetic board have already been a best-seller in a number of high street shops since he reached the PDC final in 2024 on his debut, aged 16.

Luke lifts world PDC trophy last week

He followed up his 2025 title win by beating Gian van Veen 7-1 this year.

Luke said: "Target has believed in me from day one and I'm delighted that there are many more years to come. From my playing career to my product range, we've built everything together and I'm really excited to commit to our partnership long-term and see where we can take this next."

Luke, who bought all Target staff Apple AirPods headphones for Christmas, has won almost £2.8m in prize money in two years on tour.

He has lucrative sponsorship deals with Xbox, KP Nuts and Boohoo Man and is worth an estimated £6.5m. Target has sponsored Luke since he was 12.

Chairman Garry Plummer said: "We'd never taken on someone so young, but I saw something special in him and saying 'yes' was easy.

"Watching him grow since, as both a player and a person, has been a privilege. His achievements on and off the oche have been remarkable, and this new agreement celebrates everything we've built together and the exciting future ahead." Luke, who is preparing for matches in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, has just bought a £1m, five-bed "forever home" for mum Lisa, 42, and taxi driver dad Anthony, 45, on the outskirts of his home town of Warrington, Cheshire.

He bought his first car after passing his test last November, a personalised £39,000 BMW M Sport 120.

Own a Timeless Tribute to Britain's Beloved Queen – The 2026 Centenary of Queen Elizabeth II 24-Carat Gold-Plated £5 Coin Cover for Just £19.99 Post Free!

In 2026, we celebrate 100 years since the birth of Queen Elizabeth II - a woman whose quiet strength became the heartbeat of a nation for over seven decades. Born on 21st April 1926 in London's Mayfair, she ascended to the throne at 25, guiding Britain through post-war recovery, the twilight of empire, and a new millennium. With unshakeable grace, profound resilience, and unwavering duty, she reigned as our longest-serving monarch, her warmth touching millions.

This **exclusive commemorative coin cover** immortalises her extraordinary legacy - a must-have for royal enthusiasts and history lovers.

At the heart of the cover is a stunning £5 coin, **officially approved by Buckingham Palace**, accented in pure 24-carat gold with an impeccable proof-like finish. Designed by Royal Mint artist Sandra Deiana, the reverse captures the poised 25-year-old Queen inspired by Dorothy Wilding's iconic 1952 accession portrait. Completing the cover is a genuine 2022 UK Platinum Jubilee Anniversary stamp, postmarked on **1st January 2026** - the very first day of the centenary year. This postmark confirms the **strict worldwide edition limit of just 2,026 covers** - ensuring lasting rarity and collectability.

ONLY

£19.99

PLUS FREE DELIVERY

24-Carat Gold-Plated £5 Coin

DON'T MISS OUT!

Order by 17th January 2026 to secure your cover

Money Back Guarantee

All reservations made with Harrington & Byrne are covered by our 30 Day Money Back Guarantee

Historic Moment

Secure your 2026 Centenary of Queen Elizabeth II 24-Carat Gold-Plated £5 Coin Cover today for only £19.99 post free!

Send No Money Now

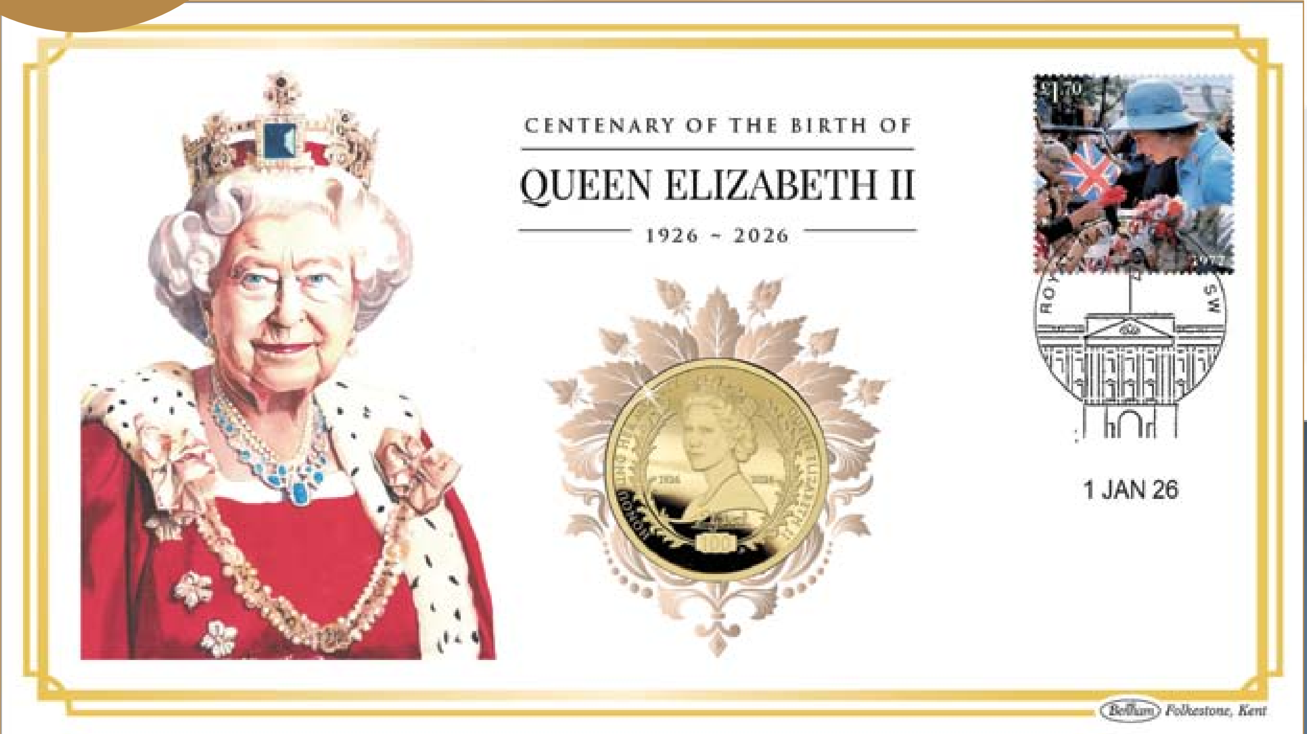
Place your no obligation reservation today by calling FREE on 0800 038 5420

Why This Cover is Unmissable:

- Marks the historic centenary of Queen Elizabeth II's birth
- Features a brand-new 2026-dated £5 coin accented in 24-carat gold
- Includes a specially postmarked UK Platinum Jubilee stamp
- Worldwide edition limited to only 2,026 covers
- Housed in a deluxe presentation folder with Certificate of Authenticity

Limited Availability – Act Now!

With such a low edition limit, this tribute to Britain's greatest monarch is expected to sell out quickly. Secure your place in history today. Order within the next 7 days to guarantee your coin cover by calling 0800 038 5420, visiting www.harringtonstamps.co.uk or return the Reservation Form below to the FREEPOST address provided. You need send no money now.



Specifications Cover Edition Limit: 2,026 Stamps: 2022 UK Platinum Jubilee Postmark Date: 1st January 2026 Coin Metal: Copper plated in 24-carat gold Coin Finish: Proof-Like Coin Weight: 25.00g Coin Diameter: 38.61mm Coin Country of Issue: Ascension Island Note: The stamp may vary from the one shown

2026 Centenary of Queen Elizabeth II 24-Carat Gold-Plated £5 Coin Cover

Please reserve me my **2026 Centenary of Queen Elizabeth II 24-Carat Gold-Plated £5 Coin Cover** for £19.99 POST FREE (max 1 per household). I need send no money now.

Quote Ref: **C597413A**

Title ______ Initial ______ Surname ______

Address ______

______ Post Code ______

Telephone Number* ______

Email Address* ______

Signed ______

(all reservations must be signed and are subject to acceptance and status)

Place completed order form in envelope and send to the following FREEPOST address: **Freepost HARRINGTON AND BYRNE LTD**

*Please help us keep you up-to-date with your reservation and selected offers. We think you would enjoy some of the latest products and offers by post from other trusted retailers. If you would prefer not to receive these by post, please tick this box [ ]. From time to time, we would like to contact you about our latest product information. If you do not want to receive any communications from us please contact: Harrington & Byrne Ltd, Registered No. 9027723, Number 17 Hanover Square, Mayfair, London W1S 1BN. To learn more, see our privacy policy at www.harringtonstamps.co.uk.

HARRINGTON & BYRNE
PHILATELIC EXPERTS

Call freephone **0800 038 5420** or visit **www.harringtonstamps.co.uk**

Quote order reference C597413A or fill in the coupon and return to Freepost HARRINGTON AND BYRNE LTD

PRUE LEITH ON SPURNING AGE BRAINWASHING

Grow old gracefully? There's no way I'll wear beige and knit

EXCLUSIVE

BY **MARC BAKER** and **FRAN BOWDEN**

PRUE LEITH has always added her own flavour to life, and at 85 she is determined not to be held back by old-fashioned ideas of how older people should behave.

The chef and Bake Off presenter has no time for stereotypes, rules... or wearing beige, and don't expect to see her doing pilates or joining a spin class.

She says: "My parents' generation, and many of mine, imbibed the idea that once we're past 60, all sorts of things are 'inappropriate' for us: dancing, sitting on a bar stool, wearing pillar-box red, smoking weed.

"They seem to think we should all wear beige, sit in a corner and knit. I think they were brainwashed.

"They got the wrong idea of their worth, concurring with the idea that oldies should be neither seen nor heard, that we should dress as unobtrusively as possible, that we should stop thinking about romance, love and sex, that we are too old to be of any use to anyone, and that we should devote ourselves to good causes and ungrateful grandchildren."

Dame Prue, mum to filmmaker daughter Li-Da and MP son Danny Kruger, perfectly showed her defiance of stereotypes at 2024's London Fashion Week, when she modelled a leather dress for designers Vin + Omi.

And she has no truck with the MEDS mantra for later life either. The M is for Mindset and having a positive attitude, E is for exercise (which you're supposed to do every day) D is for diet, eating in moderation and eschewing alcohol, and S is for stress, which should be avoided.

'I find exercise for the sake of exercise painful and unbelievably boring'

But Prue says: "Needless to say, I don't match up. I'm lucky in that I positively relish a bit of stress: I like having lots of balls in the air and a full diary, and I enjoy sorting muddles and fixing things. But I seldom feel stressed."

And the E for exercise doesn't suit her either, as she explains: "I find exercise for the sake of exercise painful and unbelievably boring. Being tortured on a pilates reformer machine, forcing oneself out into the rain to go running or doing push-ups on the bedroom floor are all variations of hell for me. Ditto yoga, steps, spinning and the rest."

It's not that Prue is lazy, it's just that she would rather play sport. She says: "I loved tennis because it's sociable and there's a chance you'll win. I loved riding because it's exhilarating, and you can do it in a gang. I used to exercise polo ponies on Ham Common in London with other amateur riders. There is intense pleasure in cantering in a companiable group in the early mornings with the mist just dispersing, watching deer and scattering rabbits.

"Weekends at home in the country offered long walks, and more tennis and riding."

Though she defies expectations, she is forced to admit that ageing has, sadly, curtailed some of these hobbies.

"As I've got older, I've reluctantly adapted," she says. "I stopped riding when my daughter left home and sold her horse, and I found myself hacking about the countryside on my tod. I realised if I was lying in a ditch with a broken back, my horse would just crop the grass and wait for me to get back on. I stopped playing tennis when I kept falling over." Other reminders of ageing have come from her own family.

Prue, who lives with retired clothes designer John Playfair, 77, in a house they built together in Moreton-in-Marsh, Glos, says: "You know you're old when your three-year-old grandchild grabs your neck and says, 'Nana, why is your neck so stringy?'"

South African-born Prue, who opened a Michelin-starred restaurant aged 29 and is an OBE, CBE and DBE, has other projects as well as presenting Channel 4's Great British Bake Off alongside Paul Hollywood, Alison Hammond and Noel Fielding.

She travels the UK for book promotions and tours of her stand-up show, often taking John. She explains: "John sweetly comes with me and that turns a work trip into a jolly jaunt.

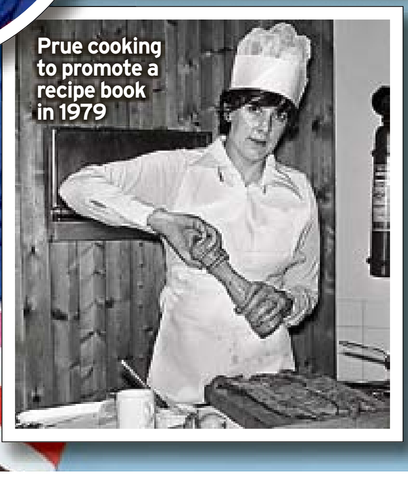
"Even if you are booked in different theatres every night, the towns are so close it's never more than a few hours' drive to get to the next one, leaving time to see the town. All four of us – me, John, Jim the driver-cum-fixer-cum-techie and Clive Tulloch, producer, director and friend, bowl along, listening to music or podcasts, or chatting and doing emails.

"We arrive in time for a nice lunch, then I'll have a nap while John goes exploring, and Clive and Jim set up."

Nap habit notwithstanding, Prue sums up her age-defying mantra by saying: "Nothing in moderation!"

● *Interview taken from an extract on Apple Books and Amazon from Being Old…And Learning To Love It, by Prue Leith, on sale in hardback from February 26, RRP £20.*

Prue as the Great British Bake Goth on catwalk at London Fashion Week, 2024. Below, with Bake Off presenter pals Paul, Alison and Noel



Prue cooking to promote a recipe book in 1979

Prue and husband John Playfair

DOLLY GOOD

As the blonde bombshell of country music celebrates her milestone 80th birthday, an exclusive Radio 2 documentary filled with famous fans tells her extraordinary story

Dolly's break came on Porter Wagoner's TV show in 1967

EXCLUSIVE

By **Richard Barber**

DOLLY Parton is 80 this month but she's still working 9 to 5. And the blonde bombshell of country music, film and philanthropy is arguably more influential and famous than she's ever been.

An hour-long Radio 2 documentary airing tomorrow celebrates the Jolene singer's landmark birthday and tells the story of her extraordinary rise to fame and fortune.

Born fourth in a dirt-poor family of 12 in the Tennessee backwoods, she set her sights on a music career and, via a mix of talent and tenacity, became an international icon famed for her singing and prolific writing: currently more than 3,000 songs and counting.

Then there's her philanthropy. Her Imagination Library has supplied six million free books to UK primary school children alone, and she donated $1million to help research into the development of the Moderna Covid vaccine.

But it was through country music that American audiences first became aware of Dolly, courtesy of Porter Wagoner, who introduced his 21-year-old protégé to the world via his TV show in 1967.

Dolly scored her first No1 single, Joshua, in February 1971. But her biggest hit of the period was Jolene. Released in late 1973, it topped the US country chart in February 1974, eventually reaching No7 in the UK in 1976.

Always envisioning a solo career, she made the decision to leave Wagoner's TV show in mid-1974. The same year, her song I Will Always Love You, written about her professional break from him, went to No1 on the country chart.

Around the same time, Elvis Presley indicated he wanted to record the song. Dolly was interested until Presley's manager, Colonel Tom Parker, told her it was standard procedure for the songwriter to sign over half of the publishing rights to any song recorded by Presley.

She refused – a decision credited with helping make her many millions of dollars in royalties from the song over the years, including the chart-topping version by Whitney Houston.

Dolly and sister Stella. Singer Suzi Quatro, right, is a big fan

LATER, she described finding old cassette tapes and discovered she'd composed Jolene and I Will Always Love You in the same session. As she said, "Buddy, that was a good night!"

Among her lifelong fans is Radio 2's "Whispering" Bob Harris. "For me," he says, "Dolly embodies everything country music stands for. From a blue-collar background to becoming a superstar, she has always somehow kept her feet on the ground, maybe precisely because of her impoverished start in life.

"I think in the end she'll be remembered above and beyond everything else as a force for good in the world. She embodies a goodness, a generosity of spirit that I find so inspiring. She's not only one of the great country stars of the last 60 years – she's one of the great people."

Pop star Debbie Harry agrees. "She came from the lowest level of the economic ladder in the States to become this wonderful, glamorous, generous person.

"And don't let's forget her comedic talents – she was terrific in 9 to 5. She's smart, funny, wise and beautiful."

Her undoubted talent apart, Dolly has also long been an inspiration to Gloria Estefan. "She's always been a solid person," says the pop icon, "who stands behind her ideals and is humble to a fault.

"And, like me, married to my one and only for 47 years, she had a rock strong union with her husband."

Dolly was just 18 when she met Carl Dean, 20, who ran an asphalt and paving business in Nashville. They got married in 1966 and were together for 60 years before his death in March last year, at the age of 82. Dolly made no secret of her grief but, typically, she vowed to carry on. "I've had so much love and support," she said, following her loss, "and I've been staying busy which is better for me.

> **'Dolly's a force for good. She embodies a goodness, her generosity of spirit is so inspiring'**

"But, when you lose someone you love, someone you've been with for 60 years, that's a big loss.

"You just have to learn new patterns, new ways. I'll always miss him but I've tried to make friends with the emptiness."

Last year wasn't a good one for Dolly. As well as Carl's death she was rumoured to be seriously ill and close to death herself – an exaggeration, as it turned out, because she was subsequently diagnosed with kidney stones. Yet, through it all, Dolly painted on her best scarlet smile and soldiered on.

Someone who knows her as well as anyone is her younger sister Stella, four years her junior, number six in the family pecking order and last seen on British television in Celebrity MasterChef 2018.

If you believe half of what you read about their relationship, the sisters have had many fallings-out over the years.

"And it's just not true," Stella insists. "Those stories are pure gossip and they've offended me greatly. Dolly and I have always been close."

Not that Stella hasn't been tested. At one point, when she was starting out as a singer, an uncle who was handling Dolly's career called Stella into his office and suggested she should change her surname because it might in some way harm Dolly's "brand".

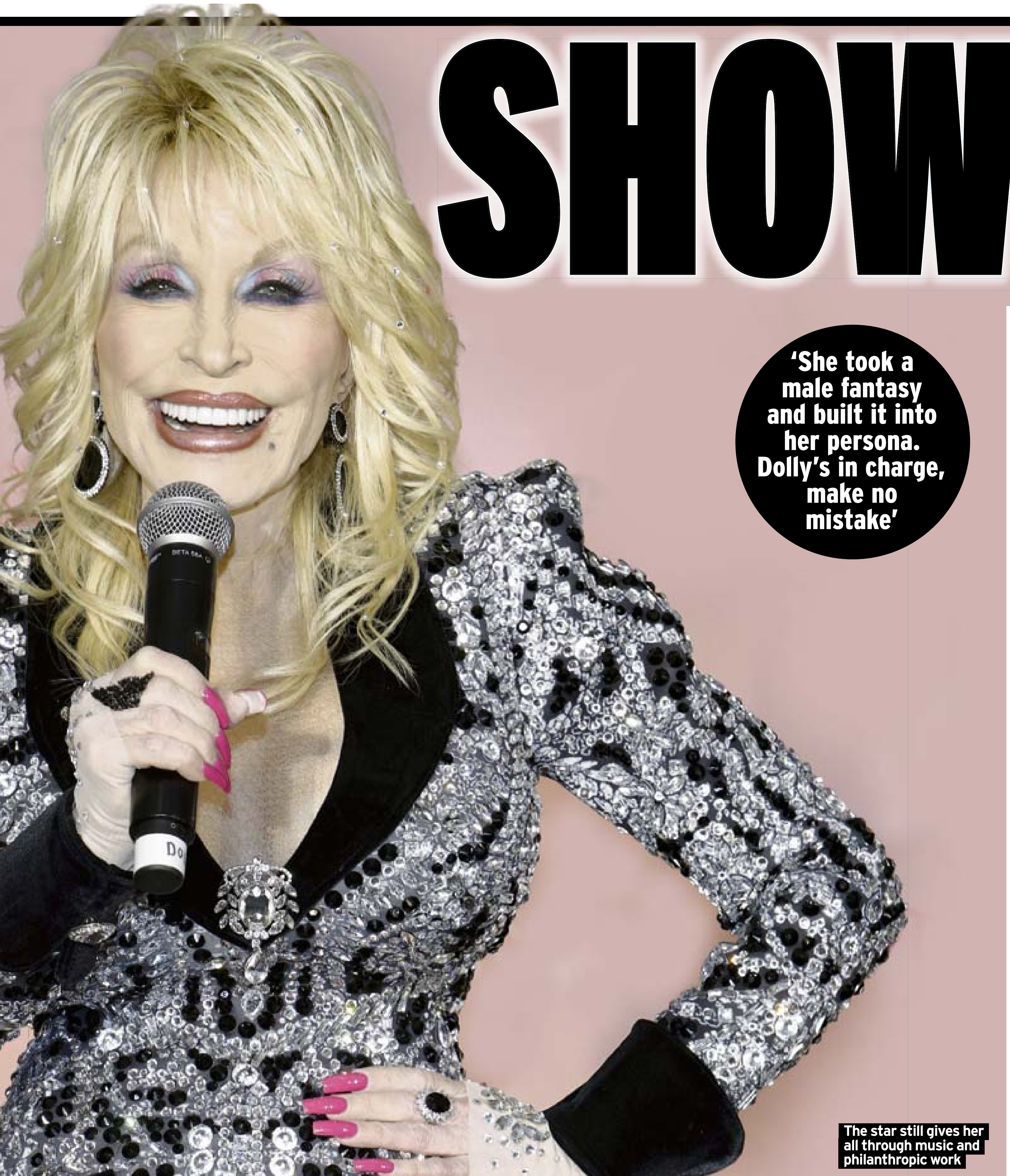
Whichever way you slice it, Dolly casts a considerable – not to say curvaceous – shadow.

Does it never get on Stella's nerves that people often want to know all about her more famous sister when they discover who she is? "It most certainly does. It irritates me immensely," she says.

Can it also possibly be true that more than one person has asked Stella whether she'd entertain the idea of having a breast enlargement?

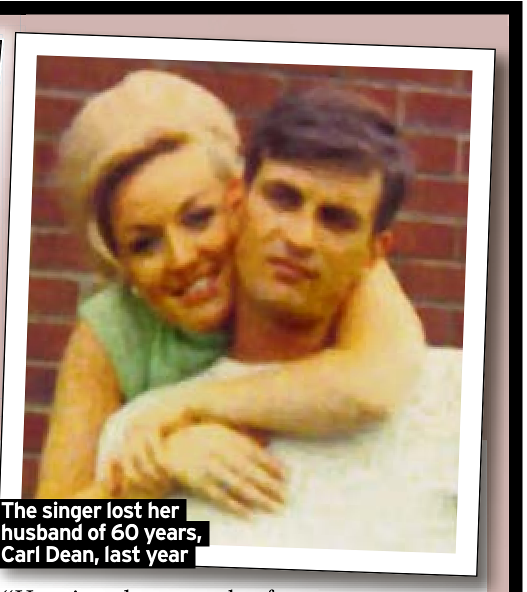
"Yes, two agents and one manager all made that suggestion." All these

SHOW



The star still gives her all through music and philanthropic work

‘She took a male fantasy and built it into her persona. Dolly’s in charge, make no mistake’



The singer lost her husband of 60 years, Carl Dean, last year

Whitney Houston made Dolly’s country music hit, I Will Always Love You, a chart topper

years later, it still makes her angry. I’m a mother and I saw my breasts as something to nourish a child.

“I was not about to turn my mammary glands into sex objects.”

She sighs before adding: “That’s what happens if you’re the kid sister of an icon. But I’ll always be as proud of her as she is of me. We have tremendous respect for one another.”

Michael Ball first had his head turned by Dolly when he saw her singing Jolene on Top of the Pops in 1976.

“I was mesmerised by the voice, the look, the personality,” he says.

He later saw her live at Radio City in New York in 2005 when he was playing the villainous Count Fosco in Andrew Lloyd Webber’s The Woman in White on Broadway. It was the first night of Dolly’s Vintage Tour.

“Hanging down at the front of the stage was a huge cloth,” recalls Michael. “The band was playing behind it and, at a given moment, the cloth was meant to fall to reveal the star of the show.

“Except the cloth didn’t drop and all we could hear was Dolly shouting: ‘I can’t get to you! I can’t see you! But I’m coming!’

“Suddenly, stagehands ran on and ripped the cloth so Dolly could finally be revealed. And, of course, she was wonderful.”

Later, Michael got the chance to go to Dolly Central in Nashville to interview her face-to-face. “I was so nervous. They always say be careful when you meet your idol.”

He needn’t have worried. “This tiny, immaculate woman walked in and she knew exactly what we wanted and exactly how to make me feel relaxed.”

Michael was lucky enough to interview her a second time. “She immediately said, ‘I remember you!’ And I thought, I wonder if you do? But you know what? Maybe she did. Whatever, she’s the gift that keeps on giving.”

Jake Shears from the Scissor Sisters spent a day with Dolly about 15 years ago when they were on the same TV show. “She was just so much fun,” he says, “and I love what she’s done for the queer community.

“Afterwards, my cousin put together a family tree and discovered that, way back, we shared a grandfather with Dolly from my mom’s side of the family, the Smoky Mountains area where everyone had about ten brothers and sisters.

“Since then, I’ve always wanted to tell Dolly that we’re cousins!”

FOR Zoe Ball, who’s met her on a number of occasions, what marks Dolly out is her natural modesty. “However much you might praise her for the Grammys she’s won or how she’s made it on behalf of so many women in music, she waves it all away. ‘Oh, I’m just lil ol’ me,’ she’ll tell you.”

And then there’s her carefully cultivated, almost cartoonish, image. Suzi Quatro says she identifies with Dolly as a woman in what was a male-dominated music industry. “But she’s never lost her femininity in the process,” she adds. “She cleverly took the male fantasy of a woman and built it into her persona. You could call that sexism but Dolly’s in charge. Make no mistake.”

To put it another way, drag artist and Strictly favourite La Voix describes Dolly simply as “a genius in rhinestones”. He once saw her in concert when she thanked the audience “for putting the food on my table and the rhinestones on my back.”

“Such wit, such wisdom,” he says.

It’s a self-awareness that has triggered a torrent of memorable one-liners.

Someone once asked her how long it took to get her hair done. “No idea, honey,” she shot back. “I’m never there.”

● *Dolly Parton: The Fans’ Story is being broadcast tonight from midnight to 1am on BBC Radio 2*

Chums

MEN'S | LADIES | HOME

LADIES FLEECE LINED THERMAL TROUSERS

WITH FULLY ELASTICATED WAIST

360°
ELASTICATED WAISTBAND
WITH DRAW CORD
PLUS
SUPER SOFT FLEECE LINING
NAVY

JANUARY SALE

NOW FROM ONLY

£17 PER PAIR +p&p

WHEN YOU BUY TWO PAIRS

SAVE UP TO £15 PER PAIR

LEG
LENGTHS
25”
27”
29”
SLATE

Total comfort and warmth on cold chilly days

SIZES 10-22

NAVY
HEATHER
BLACK
OLIVE

AVAILABLE IN 5 COLOURS: Navy, Heather, Slate, Black & Olive

- *Full 360° stretch waistband for all day comfort*
- *Drawcord fastening ensures maximum flexibility*
- *Thermal lined throughout for winter warmth*
- *3 leg lengths: 25”, 27”, 29” and sizes 10 to 22*

Problems finding winter trousers which are warm AND comfortable? Then look no further than this EXCLUSIVE winter offer from Chums. These luxurious, fleece-lined thermal leisure trousers are yours from just £17 a pair when you buy two pairs. Designed with your total comfort in mind, they feature an elasticated waistband with draw cord for maximum flexibility and a soft fleece lining for all day cosy comfort. The two side pockets are generously deep, and even the colours are warm – choose from Navy, Heather, Slate, Black or Olive. We have all sizes in stock from 10 to 22, plus three leg lengths: 25”, 27” & 29”.

Made from machine washable 65% polyester, 35% cotton, just pop them in the washing machine and they'll stay as good as new. Order today while stocks last – this is a rare opportunity to own real quality winter trousers at a limited time, big value price.

SIZE	ONE PAIR WAS	OFFER PRICE FOR 2 PAIRS	PROMOTION PRICE PER PAIR	YOU SAVE PER PAIR
10, 12	~~£27~~	£34	£17	£10
14, 16,	~~£33~~	£40	£20	£13
18, 20, 22	~~£37~~	£44	£22	£15

ORDER ONLINE NOW – IT'S FAST, SAFE & EASY

www.chums.co.uk/offers

and enter the source code EX226 PayPal

IMPORTANT! YOU MUST ENTER SOURCE CODE ON OUR WEBSITE TO BENEFIT FROM THIS PROMOTIONAL OFFER

Our friendly Customer Service Staff are waiting to take your order. Call Now!

08715 267 166

Calls cost 13 pence per minute, plus your network access charge.

Post orders to: Chums Ltd., (Dept. EX226), P.O. Box 94, St Helens, Merseyside WA10 1FG
Chums offer you FREE RETURNS and complete satisfaction if you want an exhange or your money back.
Personal shoppers welcome at our showroom, Open Mon – Fri 10am – 4pm, M57 Junction 4, off School Lane,
Unity Grove, Knowsley Business Park, Liverpool, L34 9AR

Post orders to: Chums Ltd., (Dept. EX226), P.O. Box 94, St Helens, Merseyside WA10 1FG

Please send me item(s) indicated: PLEASE USE BLOCK LETTERS

Item Number	Colour	Size	Leg Length	Qty	Price
LT042					
LT042					
LT042					
				Sub Total	
				HALF PRICE P&P £5.95	£2.95
				TOTAL	

I enclose Cheque/PO's made payable to Chums for £ ____________ please write your address (inc. post code) on reverse of cheque or charge my MasterCard/Visa Account No.

Cheque No. ☐☐☐☐☐☐

MasterCard ☐ VISA ☐ (PLEASE TICK). DEBIT MY A/C. NUMBER AS SHOWN BELOW

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

EXPIRY DATE: MONTH/YEAR /

CVC LAST 3 DIGITS ON BACK OF CARD______________

Title ________Forename________________________________Surname________________________________

Address ____

____Post Code ____________________

Mobile/Tel No. ____

Email ____

SOURCE CODE EX226

We think you'd enjoy some of the latest products and selected offers by post from other trusted retailers, charities, finance, travel, FMCG and utility companies. If you would prefer not to receive these by post, please tick this box ☐ To learn more about our trusted partners and how we use your data, see our privacy policy at www.chums.co.uk/privacy or ask for a copy when you call us. From time to time Chums would like to send you our latest catalogues, special offers and promotions by post that we think you'd appreciate as a valued customer. If you would prefer not to receive these, please tick this box ☐ Chums Ltd. Co. Reg. No. 1561474

‘Unimaginable tragedy’

Weeping bar owner ‘sorry’ for fire deaths

BY **PETER ALLEN**

THE owner of the Swiss bar in which 40 people burned to death on New Year’s Day said sorry as she left court in tears yesterday.

Jessica Moretti, 40, who was speaking publicly for the first time about the fire, said: “I want to apologise.”

As her husband Jacques was being taken to jail in a white van with tinted windows, she continued: “It’s an unimaginable tragedy. We never could have imagined this. I want to apologise.

“My thoughts are constantly with the victims, and with the people who continue to fight [for their lives].”

Her husband, 49, was taken into custody yesterday. He had been at liberty since the disaster but prosecutors said he was now considered a flight risk.

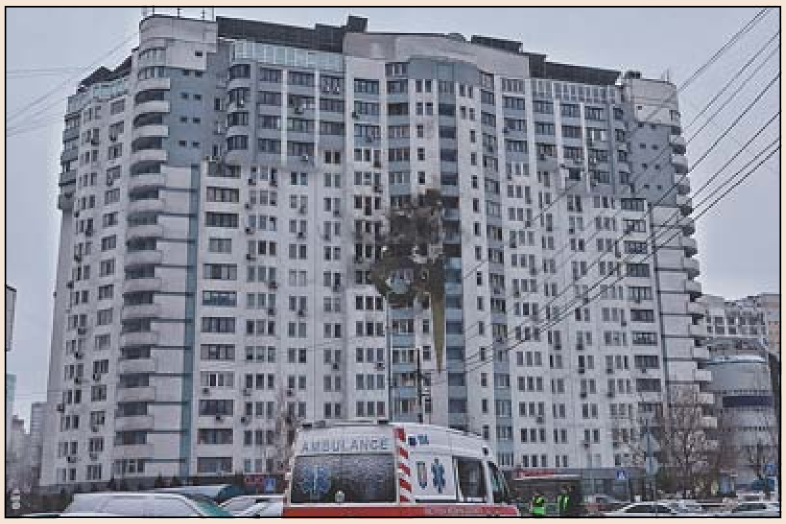
He and his wife are under formal investigation for manslaughter by negligence, causing bodily harm by negligence, and arson by negligence. Both deny wrongdoing. Prosecutors spent yesterday questioning the couple about the inferno at their bar, Le Constellation, in the upmarket ski resort of Crans-Montana.

A behind-closed-doors hearing took place as Switzerland held a national day of mourning for the dead, and for 116 others who suffered burns in the fire.

The Morettis arrived at the prosecutor’s office in Sion, the capital of Valais canton, under police escort. An inquiry source said: “Mr Moretti was placed in custody, while his wife was permitted to remain at liberty. Mr Moretti is considered a flight risk, and has been placed in a cell to prevent him leaving Switzerland.”

Lawyers for the victims of the fire had called for the French nationals to be held. Mr Moretti, who is originally from Corsica, has convictions for numerous offences linked to the vice trade, kidnap and fraud.

Jacques and Jessica Moretti arrive for hearing



Residential building in Kyiv yesterday, after being hit during the Russian air strike

Night of freezing fear as Putin’s drones hit

AN overnight attack on the Ukrainian capital left four dead, dozens hospitalised and half a million homes without light, heat or even water, as temperatures dip well into the double digits below zero.

Mayor Vitaly Klitschko has called on citizens who could leave the city for alternative accommodation to do so. Even the country’s parliament building was without water or heat.

More than 240 drones and 36 missiles pummelled the city in the dead of Thursday night into yesterday morning as people hunkered down in flats, afraid to venture out through the icy streets to reach bomb shelters.

Terrorised

Photos of damaged or flaming tower blocks, and streets below littered with fallen debris and unexploded ordinance, flooded social media well into yesterday.

With the streets recently turned into a huge skating rink following a lengthy spell of freezing rain, my family and I opted to stay in bed.

By 3am the heat had gone out, making the usual option of taking cover in a now-freezing corridor less palatable. By morning there was no light. Anatoly, a pensioner, who lives with his invalid wife, said they were terrorised all night. He said: “She could not sleep and was going crazy as the building shook. There is a heating plant near our home that they were trying to hit.”

LIFE IN KYIV

JOHN MARONE

Despatch from the frontline

By morning their flat was also without light, heat or water.

But like many Ukrainians, Anatoly was not totally unprepared.

He said he had just bought two large containers of water and some gas for the cooking range.

Tamara, my septuagenarian neighbour, was not as well stocked but made the most of the electricity while it lasted by making herself some hot soup. She also stayed on the phone with a woman a couple of floors below, who is stuck in her flat with a broken leg after slipping on the icy streets.

Although morning brought little respite, those frozen streets were soon filled with people going to their jobs, not least because many places of business have generators to heat and light them.

School children, it was announced by city authorities, would return to their lessons from the winter holidays to a mixed format of online and in-person learning.

In the meantime, young and old cling to power banks, candles, batteries and their phones until the city is able to fix battered services.

DAILY EXPRESS
SUNDAY EXPRESS
NEW YEAR
SALE
GET THIS PAPER FOR
99p
A DAY FOR SIX MONTHS

VISIT express.reachsubs.co.uk
OR CALL US ON 0345 149 4848
OFFER CODE: CP26
Phone lines are open Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm. Standard call charges apply.
SCAN ME

***Terms and conditions**: Offer open to new subscription customers only. This offer entitles you to receive both your Daily and Sunday papers at a rate of £0.99 a day for 26 weeks and then a 10% discount thereafter. This offer is redeemable by direct debit (taken by a monthly payment plan). **Home Delivery orders via our direct service:** A daily charge will apply, delivery charges vary and the service is not available in all postcodes. **Voucher orders:** You will be sent individually dated pre-paid vouchers (to redeem at the retailer) within 14 days by post and use the vouchers as payment, a delivery charge will apply. Not all retailers offer home delivery, please check directly with them. Phone lines are open Mon-Fri 9am-5pm, (closed on Bank Holidays), standard call charges apply. Offer valid until Sunday February 8, 2026.

EXCLUSIVE

By **Karen Rockett**

SEAS THE DAY

LOOKING for a new adventure? Broaden your horizons this year with a voyage on the high seas. Whether you're seeking sunshine, safari or stunning scenery, there's a once-in-a-lifetime cruise to take you there. Here are 18 of the best cruises to book in 2026.

Zambezi Queen is designed for wildlife spotting

Seabourn Venture takes in Brazil's vibrant Rio de Janeiro

EUROPE

1 Orient Express Silenseas

Around 140 years after it launched the most luxurious train in the world, the iconic Orient Express moves into cruising. The ship is the ultimate in cruising luxury with space for just 120 passengers. It includes a 1,415-square-metre Presidential Suite, two pools, two restaurants and a speakeasy bar.

The route: Inspired by the Golden Age of the French Riviera, qastops include Saint-Tropez, Cannes, Monte Carlo, Cap d'Antibes, Cassis, and Marseille.

● *Dates and deals: Eight-night Côte d'Azur & Provence cruise departing July 11, prices start from £35,535pp for a suite. (four-night options available).*

● *Book it via orient-express.com*

2 World Traveller – Atlas Ocean Voyages

As a smaller 196-passenger luxury vessel, this ship can sail into less frequented ports, so passengers can avoid the crowds.

The route: The "Epicurean Expedition" Mediterranean cruise between Trapani and Marsala in Sicily focuses on regional culinary experiences. It includes wine tastings, visits to local cheese and meat producers, and archaeological site visits, plus stays from specialised guest chefs who lead culinary-focused excursions and teach cooking classes.

● *Dates and deals: Seven-night sailings start in September 2026, prices start from £3,350pp.*

● *Book it via atlasoceanvoyages.com*

3 SS Emilie – Uniworld

River cruises offer the chance for passengers to dock in the heart of cities, offering easy access to cultural landmarks and locations.

The route: This Danube river cruise takes in four capital cities: Vienna, Bratislava, Belgrade and Budapest. Vienna is home to grand coffee houses, world-class opera, dancing Lipizzaner horses and opulent baroque palaces.

The scenery along the river changes constantly, from lush vineyards to the vast skies of the steppes. The cruise is themed around Gustav Klimt and includes a private view of Klimt's masterpiece, The Kiss, in the Belvedere Museum in Vienna.

● *Dates & deals: Departs from either Belgrade or Vienna in May onwards, seven to 10 nights with flights included, prices start from £3,449pp.*

● *Book it via uniworld.com*

AMERICAS

4 Queen Mary – Cunard

The world's only true ocean liner (don't call it a cruise ship!) offers a luxurious and traditional experience with formal gala evenings, a planetarium, a vast library, and diverse itineraries.

The route: The "London at Sea" Transatlantic cruise, supported by the Olivier Awards, has an illustrious line-up of theatre talent. Peek behind the scenes to learn the secrets of putting on a world-class show, and enjoy unique daytime events and special evening shows throughout the voyage.

● *Dates and deals: Departs from Southampton to New York for seven nights on May 22, prices range from £1,084pp to £6,286pp depending on cabin.*

● *Book it via cunard.com*

5 Seabourn Venture

A 264-passenger luxury vessel with eight dining experiences, spa therapies and complimentary champagne and caviar!

The route: The "Wild South Atlantic & Falkland Islands" from Buenos Aires in Argentina to Rio de Janeiro in Brazil travels the southeastern coast of the continent and takes in the Falkland Islands, Ushuaia, and Puerto Madryn.

● *Dates and deals: March 20 or 21 for 14-15 nights, prices start from £5,949pp.*

● *Book it via seabourn.com*

6 Norwegian Jewel

A mid-sized 2,376-passenger ship offering a more relaxed, "freestyle" cruising experience, lively bars, and classic entertainment.

The route: Grab your stetson for the "Boots on the Water" country music festival cruise, a round-trip from Tampa in Florida to Costa Maya and Cozumel in Mexico. Five days of live concerts featuring top country stars, line dancing, and themed nights to keep the party rolling.

● *Dates and deals: Five nights from Feb 13 –18, prices start from £2,102pp.*

● *Book it via bootsonthewatercruise.com*

CARIBBEAN

7 Norwegian Luna

This Prima Plus class ship makes its debut in 2026 and features the "Aqua Slide Coaster" and three-bedroom duplex Haven suites.

The route: The ship's inaugural Caribbean season includes Western Caribbean itineraries to Roatan Island, Honduras, Costa Maya and Cozumel, Mexico, and Harvest Caye, Belize. Eastern Caribbean locations include Puerto Plata, Tortola, St. Thomas, and NCL's private island, Great Stirrup Cay.

● *Dates and deals: Seven-night Eastern and Western Caribbean itineraries from Miami. Maiden voyage departs April 4, on Western route. Prices start from £1,088.75pp for an inside cabin.*

● *Book it via ncl.com*

8 SeaDream I – SeaDream Yacht Club

Private luxury is the watchword on this recently refurbished yacht. It's not brimming with venues or entertainments (aside from the only Thai-certified spa at sea), but ever-present staff members offer a "whatever you want, whenever you want" service.

The route: The British and US Virgin Islands, French West Indies, Grenadines, and Anguilla. The yacht's intimate size gives it access to much smaller Caribbean ports like St Barts, Saba and Bequia.

● *Date and deals: From seven to 13 nights, prices start from £4,263pp and £6,849pp.*

● *Book via seadream.com*

9 Renaissance – Ambassador Cruise

A 1,100-passenger intimate and comfortable ship, newly refurbished for 2026, traditionally British but with a French feel and a multilingual crew. Cabins are spacious, and the pool has a retractable roof.

The route: The "Tropical Treasures" cruise visits the ABC Islands (Aruba, Bonaire and Curaçao), which feel different from the rest of the Caribbean, with their Dutch-influenced food and culture. Then it's onto Dominica, Martinique, Guadeloupe, St Vincent and the Grenadines and St Lucia. Perfect for some winter sun.

Quieter side of the Med courtesy of the World Traveller

Alaska in style aboard MSC's upgraded Poesia

From the Americas to Antarctica, the Caribbean to the South Pacific, discover a world of choice aboard these top cruises setting sail in 2026

Ocean liner Queen Mary mixes luxury with tradition on its Transatlantic sailing

Explorer cruises offer adventure in the heart of the Antarctic

- *Dates and deals: 14 nights departing from Bridgetown, November 22, prices start from £2,199pp, fly-cruise from Manchester.*
- *Book via ambassadorcruiseline.com*

SOUTH PACIFIC

10 Star Breeze – Windstar

The suites on this ship are enormous. Even standard size comes with a walk-in closet and a big bath.

The route: French Polynesia and the South Pacific is perhaps the closest place to paradise on earth. This cruise leaves the beaten path behind to sail to hidden gems, including the islands of Moorea, Huahine, Raiatea and Bora Bora.

- *Dates and deals: Seven nights all year round, sailings from Papeete, prices start from £2,230pp.*
- *Book via silversea.com*

11 Diamond Princess – Princess Cruise

An elegant mid-sized Grand Class ship exploring Asia and Japan, this cruise offers a mix of traditional and authentic Japanese dining and adults-only lotus pool, catering to cultural travellers.

The route: The "Japan Explorer Spring Flowers" cruise traces Japan's archipelago coastline, and the spring date coincides with sakura season, when vast swathes of pale pink cherry blossom transform parks and gardens. From Tokyo sail to Hiroshima, Nagasaki, Kagoshima, Miyazaki, Kochi, and Tokushima, plus Busan in South Korea and cruising in the Kanmon Straits.

- *Dates and deals: 11 nights, departing March 17, prices start from £1,819pp.*
- *Book via princess.com*

12 Celebrity Solstice

Described as "a destination in itself", the ship includes The Lawn Club, where you can kick back on the grass and take in a live concert and a spa with its own Persian garden.

The route: A 12-night round trip starting in Sydney, Australia, explores the South Pacific islands of New Caledonia and Vanuatu and includes stops in Lifou, Mystery Island, Port Vila, Luganville and Noumea.

- *Dates and deals: Departs November 10, prices start from £978pp.*
- *Book via celebritycruises.com*

AFRICA

13 Viking Osiris

A beautifully designed 82-passenger luxury ship complete with infinity edge pool.

The route: Passengers can tick off many ancient wonder boxes as they sail the Nile. Travelling between Aswan and Luxor, the route stops at UNESCO World Heritage Sites including the Valley of the Kings and Temple of Karnak, where Viking can arrange special access.

- *Dates and deals: 11-night sailings on the "Pharaohs & Pyramids" 2026 cruise in February, prices start from £10,075pp.*
- *Book via vikingrivercruises.co.uk*

14 Azamara Journey - Azamara Cruises

A luxurious boutique hotel at sea, Azamara's mid-sized vessel never feels crowded and offers everything modern cruisers are looking for, plus some unexpected extras onboard and cultural immersive experiences along the way.

The route: The South Africa Intensive Cruise sails from Port Louis in Mauritius to Madagascar, and on to Richards Bay, Durban and Cape Town in South Africa.

- *Dates and deals: 14 nights starting on January 20, prices start from £4,509pp*
- *Book via azamara.com*

15 Zambezi Queen

Designed specifically for wildlife viewing, the intimate and eco-friendly 28-passenger Zambezi Queen boutique boat offers close up unobstructed views of the river and African landscape.

The route: Embark on a uniquely African adventure with uninterrupted views of the Chobe National Park, home to over 120,000 elephants and other remarkable wildlife. The vessel operates between Namibia and Botswana, with guests typically boarding on the Namibian side.

- *Dates and deals: Two-night sailings during January, February, and December, or three and four-night sailings, available every Friday, all year round. From £699 per night pp*
- *Book via zqcollection.com*

ALASKA/ICELAND/ANTARCTICA

16 The Poesia – MSC Cruises

The ship is having a major refurbishment in early 2026 to add the MSC Yacht Club (a "ship within a ship" luxury concept), new dining options (Butcher's Cut, Kaito Sushi Bar), and a refurbished spa. The upgrades coincide with the ship's debut Alaska season.

The route: Setting off from Seattle in the north west of the US, the itinerary takes in the Inside Passage, Juneau, Ketchikan, Icy Strait Point, and Victoria in British Columbia, focusing on wildlife, glaciers, and culture.

- *Dates and deals: Departures between May and September, seven nights from £699pp cruise only, to £1899pp with flights and hotels.*
- *Book via msccruises.co.uk*

17 Oceania Marina

The 1,250-passenger ship has just undergone a major glow-up from buzzy bars called Horizons and Martinis to a grand dining room. Its penthouse suites have also been revamped with Italian marble bathrooms.

The route: The 14-night "Visions of the Solar Eclipse" cruise from Copenhagen to Reykjavik is designed to view the August 12 total solar eclipse in Iceland.

- *Dates and deals: Departs July 30 from £4,700pp.*
- *Book via sixstarcruises.co.uk*

18 Ocean Explorer and World Explorer

Modern luxury polar expedition cruise ships are highly regarded for their comfort and excellent expedition teams, and are chartered by specialised Antarctic operators

The route: The Penguin Safari Expedition is a 16-day journey to South Georgia and the Antarctic. It's designed to be the quickest route to South Georgia Island, known for its vast king penguin colonies and elephant seals, and explores the Antarctic Peninsula and its rich polar history. The cruise starts and ends in Ushuaia, Argentina.

- *Dates and deals: Departs January 24 or February 1 from £15,357pp to £31,036pp.*
- *Book via voyagers.travel*

All prices have been converted from dollars to pounds

BOWIE
1947-2016
ONLY £3.99
AN UNOFFICIAL CELEBRATION OF HIS LIFE AND HIS LEGACY

DAVID BOWIE
A CELEBRATION OF HIS LIFE AND LEGACY

ON SALE NOW

VISIT: **REACHSHOPS.CO.UK/BOWIE**
ORDER YOUR COPY NOW OR PICK UP AT PARTICIPATING RETAILERS.

SCAN ME

Online purchase price excludes P&P. See website for details.

Winter Sale

Reader Offer in partnership with Yimbly.com

ENERGY-EFFICIENT WINGED HEATED AIRER

Now £49.69 was £69.99
Save 29%
Scan to order online

Dry larger laundry loads quickly and efficiently with the Speedi Dry Winged Heated Airer.

Designed with wide folding wings, it provides 12m of drying space — ideal for bulky items like towels, bedding, jumpers, and trousers that need extra room to hang flat. Featuring 18 heated bars that warm up to 70°C, it dries clothes fast while being gentle on fabrics to reduce creases and prevent shrinkage. Costing just 6p per hour to run, it's an energy-efficient alternative to tumble drying. It also includes a bonus insulating cover to trap warmth and protect clothes from dust or pet hair. Lightweight, foldable, and easy to store, it's perfect for year-round drying.

yimbly.com/Offer61 Quote **Offer61** Offer ends 5th February

UK Customer Service 0161 444 9879 | Now Open 7 Days a Week

Offers subject to availability. Terms and Conditions apply. Free Delivery over £50. Customer Service operates 9.00am - 5.00pm, Monday - Friday, and 9.00am - 1.00pm, Saturday and Sunday, except on Bank Holidays. Calls are charged at your standard network rate. Visit yimbly.com/terms for full details, including Delivery & Returns information. For queries, contact support@yimbly.com.

Trustpilot ★★★★☆

What's your tipple?

by **Matt Nixson**

Here's to mixing it up in 2026

2
bitterlekker

EVER feel like life has become a bit deja vu? Mix things up by taking yourself out of your comfort zone. I'm not suggesting you need to throw yourself out of a plane (as some of my Express colleagues are doing for our Christmas charity appeal), dye your hair a different colour or even start jogging.

Small changes are the way forward. And you can start by trying something new drinks-wise. From Greek wine, delicious, to "pale reds", non-alcoholic fizz and a really refreshing South African aperitif, I've suggested a few below.

So when you find yourself in the supermarket reaching for the old reliable bottle of sauvignon blanc, pinot noir or prosecco, why not try something a bit different?

Because remember, variety is the spice of life and you might just find a firm new favourite.

SIX WAYS WITH LIGHTS AND SHADES

1 Vilarnau 0% Sparkling White (£9.25, 0%)
If you've been looking for a non-alcoholic sparkling wine, look no further than this Spanish cava with plenty of fizz and flavour. A bunch of peaches, apples and tropical fruit, with notes of lemon and lime. Medium-bodied with a nice acidic tingle on the palate. Available from Amazon.

2 Babylonstoren Bitterlekker (£10, 0%)
Taste-wise, this non-alcoholic aperitif from South Africa isn't a million miles away from famed Scottish soft drink Irn-Bru. It's the same colour, too. Combining honeybush with a citrus kick from blood oranges and grapefruit, it's a refreshing (and moreish) alternative to alcohol. Perfect over ice. Available from The Newt in Somerset.

3 Kokotos Three Hills Agiorgitiko 2024 (£14, 12.5%)
Dry, medium-bodied and deliciously acidic, this Greek red wine made using local agiorgitiko grapes is a great find. Subtle flavours of strawberry and cherry with aromas of rose and hints of vanilla and cinnamon. A really nice red for sipping. Available from Maltby&Greek.

4 Gosnells of London (£12.50, 5.5%)
Mead-makers Gosnells' signature brew is like taking a trip back in time. The delicious, lightly-sparkling beverage, made using honey, has been on the cusp of a major comeback for the past few years. Light, floral and refreshing. Try mead as a lower-alcohol replacement for fizz if you're looking for an unusual aperitif. Available from Gosnells.

5 M Chapoutier 'Rouge Clair' 2023 (From £12.99, 12.5%)
This "pale red" – the term is used to describe light-bodied red wines with lower tannins and higher acidity that are best served chilled – brings a sip of sunshine from the southern Rhône. Raspberries, cherries and plum on the palate with notes of vanilla, wrapped up in a delicious medium-bodied finish. Available from The Oxford Wine Company, Latitude Wines, Hop Cellar and Islington Wine.

6 Nozeco Special Edition Alcohol Free Fine Sparkling (£4.46, 05.%)
This cheap and (undoubtedly) cheerful fizz is made in France using dealcoholised Spanish white wine. While unlikely to win any awards, it's not a bad drop if you're looking for something to toast Dry January. Apple notes and plenty of acidity even if it lacks the kick of alcohol. Available from The Co-op.

Share your own drink-related tips with matt.nixson@reachplc.com

I gave my umbilical blood...then a donor saved my girl’s life!

BY **ELLA PICKOVER**

Natasha Kirkpatrick donated her daughter Ellaria’s cord blood when she was born in 2017. Inset, collected blood

A MOTHER who donated umbilical cord blood after giving birth has described how her daughter’s life was saved by a similar donation a few years later.

Natasha Kirkpatrick donated her child Ellaria’s cord blood when she was born in 2017.

Then, in 2022, Ellaria herself needed a vital donation to treat blood cancer.

Natasha, 37, said that without the donation Ellaria “would not be here”.

The youngster, now eight, was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukaemia in 2019 when she was just two. She relapsed after chemotherapy.

Ellaria was due to have a stem cell transplant in 2022 but it was cancelled at the last minute when the donor caught Covid.

Instead, she received an emergency cord blood transplant at Bristol Royal Hospital for Children.

Cord blood is rich in stem cells and is found in the placenta and umbilical cord after the birth of a baby.

It can be used to treat a number of cancers, immune conditions and genetic disorders.

Monitored

Natasha, a teacher from Marston Moretaine, in Bedfordshire, said: “I knew about cord blood because I’d donated Ellaria’s own cord blood when she was born.

“The actual stem cell transplant is not scary – it’s syringes and the stem cells going into the blood – but it was a very hard time overall.

“Ellaria had a virus and was an inpatient for a good five months.

“She is still being monitored and she had some after-effects that affected her heart and brain a little.

“You would not know what she has been through from looking at her, but what she has been through is just incredible.

“She is now in year four at primary school. She is a typical girl, loves her music, like Elvis, K-pop and the Spice Girls, and her dancing. She is funny. She’s quite a girly-girl but with a boy’s sense of humour.”

The mother of three, who is pregnant with her fourth baby with husband Jonathan, added: “I cannot thank the mum who donated the cord blood Ellaria received enough. Without the doctors and without that transplant, she would not be here.

“There are really no words to express how I feel. I just think it’s great that people do it – and I was proud to do it myself.”

It comes as NHS Blood and Transplant announced that it has issued its 1,000th unit of baby umbilical cord blood for stem cell transplants.

The NHSBT cord blood bank in Filton, Bristol, which opened in 1996, is the fourth largest in the world and holds nearly 20,000 donations available for clinical use.

The bank sent out its 999th and 1,000th units, for the same young adult with leukaemia to receive, at the start of the year.

Women giving birth at certain hospitals can opt to donate once the placenta has been delivered.

The cord blood is then frozen and stored at a temperature of minus 196C until a match is found.

Each unit can be used decades after donation.

NHSBT said that the last 20 cord blood transplants have been issued to hospitals in London, Bristol, Manchester, Birmingham, Glasgow, Canada and the Netherlands, mostly to treat leukaemia but also genetic immunodeficiencies in child patients.

Discussing the significance of the 1,000th transplant unit, Alex Ross, head of NHS Blood and Transplant’s cord blood bank, said: “This was a special moment for our cord bank that we’ve been looking forward to for months.

“We thank every generous mum who has donated over the years.

“Cord blood is rich in stem cells. They are extracted from the placenta and umbilical cord after a baby is born.

“The placenta and cord are usually thrown away but when donated they can save lives.

“A transplant from stem cells found in cord blood can be a very effective type of treatment for certain conditions – for example, in patients with acute leukaemia or severe immunodeficiencies.

“Stem cells from cord blood can be safely stored for years.

“Your baby may be grown up by the time they save a life, perhaps even older than the recipient. It’s a very special way to donate.”

Winter Sale
Reader Offer in partnership with Yimbly.com

3-TIER MINI GREENHOUSE

Now
£22.39
was £27.99
Save
20%
Scan to order online

Grow plants in smaller outdoor spaces with this 3-tier mini greenhouse. It is designed for use on patios, balconies and in garden corners, making it suitable for growing flowers, herbs and vegetables where space is limited. The greenhouse is built with a steel frame that provides a strong and stable structure. Its three-tier design helps keep plants organised and easy to reach.

Each shelf is made from mesh, allowing excess water to drain away and helping to prevent liquid build-up that could damage the frame. A durable three-layer polyethylene cover helps protect plants from wind and light rain while still allowing light to pass through. The cover includes a roll-up door, making it easier to access plants for watering, feeding and general care.

With its compact size and upright shape, this mini greenhouse provides a practical growing area without taking up too much space. It is suitable for gardeners who want a simple way to protect plants during early growth stages.

- ✓ Perfect for areas with limited space
- ✓ 3 shelves for easy organisation
- ✓ Roll up doors for easy access
- ✓ Materials: Metal frame and lightweight, weather-resistant plastic cover
- ✓ Dimensions: H130 x W69 x D49 cm

yimbly.com/Offer17 Quote **Offer17** Offer ends 1st February

UK Customer Service 0161 444 9879 | **Now Open 7 Days a Week**

Offers subject to availability. Terms and Conditions apply. Free Delivery over £50. Customer Service operates 9.00am - 5.00pm, Monday - Friday, and 9.00am - 1.00pm, Saturday and Sunday, except on Bank Holidays. Calls are charged at your standard network rate. Visit yimbly.com/terms for full details, including Delivery & Returns information. For queries, contact support@yimbly.com.

Trustpilot ★★★★☆

30-SECOND CHALLENGE

JUST follow the instructions from left to right, starting with the number given to reach an answer at the end of the row. Set your own 30-second challenge: for the very young or arithmetically rusty, you have 30 seconds for the BEGINNER task. For a greater challenge, try BEGINNER and INTERMEDIATE in 30 seconds. True mental gymnasts should try INTERMEDIATE and ADVANCED in 30 seconds together.

Today's answers can be found on page 43

										YOUR ANSWERS
Beginner	38	-12	x3	-15	÷7	SQUARE IT	-25	3/8 OF THIS	+45	
Intermediate	156	5/6 OF THIS	+95	TAKE THE SQUARE ROOT	x8	+16	÷4	-18	x6	
Advanced	59	+85	7/12 OF IT	+300	÷24	+587	4/67 OF THIS	x8	-94	

THE NATIONAL LOTTERY

FRIDAY, JANUARY 9
EUROMILLIONS
1 7 10 26 34 2 4

THUNDERBALL
3 8 15 32 36 5

THURSDAY, JANUARY 8
SET FOR LIFE
13 17 26 29 46 4

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 7
LOTTERY
3 9 20 33 45 50 12

THUNDERBALL
1 10 13 26 38 6

THE HEALTH LOTTERY

FRIDAY, JANUARY 9
16 22 43 45 49 11

THURSDAY, JANUARY 8
14 20 30 37 43 4

The Health Lottery has raised more than £135m for health-related causes since 2011. Details at thehealthlotteryfoundation.org.uk

PHONE POLL RESULTS

We asked in our poll on Thursday:

Should Keir Starmer comply with human rights court in Shamima Begum case?

YES: 5%

NO: 95%

SUDOKU

Fill in all the squares so that each row, each column, and each 3x3 square contain all the digits from 1 to 9

3		7		8	6	1		
	6	4	2				9	8
	2				1		5	
		6		7		3		
9	8		4	6			1	7
				9		4		
	3		5				7	
7	1			3		5	4	
		5	6	1		8		

This is the Quick Sudoku for the solver in a hurry.
For today's solution call:
09071812571
(Calls cost 80p per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge)
For extra clues call:
09013225602
(Calls cost 75p plus your telephone company's network access charge)

MORE PUZZLES – PAGES 42&43, PULLOUT

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

7	9	2	8	6	4	3	5	1
1	6	3	7	5	9	2	4	8
8	5	4	1	3	2	6	9	7
9	4	6	2	1	5	8	7	3
3	1	7	9	8	6	5	2	4
5	2	8	4	7	3	1	6	9
2	7	5	3	9	8	4	1	6
6	3	1	5	4	7	9	8	2
4	8	9	6	2	1	7	3	5

DO YOU HAVE A STORY OR PHOTO?

If you have a story:
020 8612 7077
or email:
expressnews @reachplc.com
If you have a photo:
020 8612 7171
or email:
expresspix @express.co.uk
For general inquiries:
020 8612 7000

WWW.EXPRESS.CO.UK FOR GREAT READER OFFERS

Hari Budha Magar celebrates reaching top of Mount Vinson

Peaks of success...

BY **LAUREN BEAVIS**

BATTLING Gurkha veteran Hari Budha Magar has become the first double above-knee amputee to summit the highest peaks on all seven continents.

Hari, 46, who lost both legs in an Afghanistan blast, scaled Antarctica's 16,050ft Mount Vinson in a three-day -25C climb to end his six-year mission. He said conditions "meant I was literally crawling".

Hari aims to raise disability awareness and inspire others "to climb their own mountain whatever that might be", and is fundraising for veterans' charities in his Conquering Dreams – 7 Summits challenge.

Winter Sale Reader Offer in partnership with Yimbly.com

Now
£38.50
was £57.50
Save
33%
Scan to order online
Adjustable temperature between 5-35°C

HEAT YOUR ROOM IN MINUTES

Create a warm and inviting space with this 9-fin electric oil heater. Its u-type fins provide fast, even heat, generating a strong convection channel that warms your room efficiently. With three power settings and an adjustable temperature range from 5-35°C, it's easy to tailor the heat to your comfort. Control is effortless using the mechanical knob, making adjustments simple and intuitive. Whisper-quiet operation makes it ideal for bedrooms and offices, and safety features - including overheat and tip-over protection, rounded corners, and a reinforced back panel - reduce the risk of accidents. Freestanding with caster wheels and a convenient handle, it's easy to move while cable storage keeps your space tidy.

✓ 3 Power settings (800W, 1200W, and 2000W)
✓ Size: H56 x W22 x D32cm

yimbly.com/Offer72 Quote Offer72 Offer ends 5th February

UK Customer Service 0161 444 9879 | Now Open 7 Days a Week

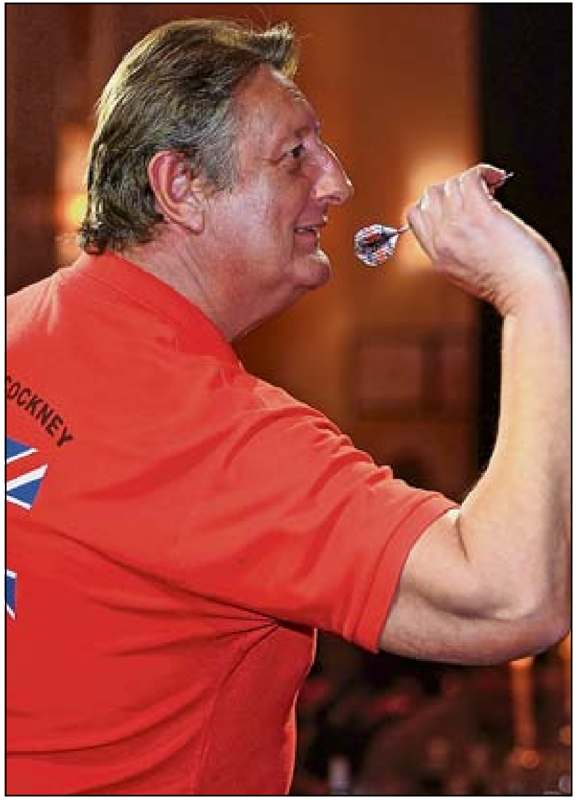
Offers subject to availability. Terms and Conditions apply. Free Delivery over £50. Customer Service operates 9.00am - 5.00pm, Monday - Friday, and 9.00am - 1.00pm, Saturday and Sunday, except on Bank Holidays. Calls are charged at your standard network rate. Visit yimbly.com/terms for full details, including Delivery & Returns information. For queries, contact support@yimbly.com.

Trustpilot

The Saturday briefing

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER by **CAROLINE FORD**

Pictures: GETTY



COR BLIMEY: "Crafty Cockney" Eric Bristow and Cockney icon Barbara Windsor. Below, British & Irish Lions

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Is there anything you're yearning to know? Send your questions, on any subject, to the contacts given below, and we will do our best to answer them...

Q To be called a Cockney, I was told that a person had to be born within the sound of Bow Bells in London. How did this custom start and where did the word Cockney come from?

Phillip Baskerville, Horsham, USA

A The word has resisted any simple etymology but it seems Cockney evolved from a medieval insult into a badge of pride.

The term is associated with the working-class of London's East End and a distinctive dialect, of which Cockney rhyming slang is a feature. This is said to have evolved from Victorian street sellers or costermongers.

The traditional definition of being a Cockney is someone born within earshot of "Bow Bells" – the bells of St Mary-le-Bow, Cheapside, in the City of London.

The word "cokeneye" was first recorded in 1362 by William Langford in his narrative poem Piers Plowman. It referred to a "cock's egg" i.e. a misshapen, yolkless egg sometimes laid by a young hen that is defective. It was used as an insult to describe someone as useless.

A few decades later, an alternative use for a "cockered child" – one that is pampered and indulged – was referenced by Chaucer for someone who is delicate and squeamish.

In the 16th century, the word "Cockney" was being used – particularly by wealthy country folk – to show contempt for what they regarded as pampered, lazy and "weakling" city dwellers.

In 1600, Samuel Rowland first recorded the use of the phrase "Bowe-bell Cockney" to refer to a Londoner but it soon became associated exclusively with the East End. It was also during this time that Cockneys became known for their wit and resilience and today the culture and language is still thriving in the East End and beyond – with celebrities associated with that heritage or the spirit of a Cockney, including: Dame Vera Lynn, Alan Sugar, Charlie Chaplin, Barbara Windsor, Michael Caine, Eric Bristow and Ray Winstone.

Q Touring sides in both rugby codes are known as the British Lions. Was this first used in rugby league or rugby union?

Mike Summerscales, France

A Opponents one minute, team mates the next, the "Lions" of both union (RFU) and league (RFL) are one of sport's longest-lived traditions and a staple of the rugby calendar.

Known as the British and Irish Lions, the RFU squad is unique in bringing together the best players from England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales once every four years.

The RFL team differs in that it is called the Great Britain Lions, representing England, Scotland and Wales. Ireland competes internationally as its own nation.

The history of the British and Irish Lions began with a private commercial sporting tour to New Zealand and Australia in 1888.

It was a huge success in sporting terms and helped to kick off the tradition of touring in rugby.

During the 1924 tour of South Africa, local journalists nicknamed the squad "The Lions" for the lion symbol on their ties, but it was not officially adopted until the 1950 tour of Australia, when they first wore their iconic red jerseys.

Although the name originates with the rugby union team, the Great Britain rugby league squad has used the nickname "Lions" for its tours for nearly as long. The team was originally known as the Northern Union, after 22 clubs from the North of England broke away from the RFU in 1895. In 1948 they became known as Great Britain for the Rugby League Ashes against Australia and, like the RFU side, officially adopted the "Lions" name in 1950.

Q What is the meaning of shrift in "short shrift"?

Helen Michaels, Birmingham

A Used figuratively to mean an inadequate amount of time or unsympathetic attention given, "short shrift" is odd in having an archaic, obsolete word within a well-known and well-used phrase.

"Shrift" can be traced back to the Old English verb "shrive", which meant to hear confession, with "scrift" being the act of confession or penance imposed.

A "short shrift" was a quick confession allowed to a person before execution. The phrase was made popular by Shakespeare in Richard III, where a character condemned to death is told to "make a short shrift". Today, the literal, harsh meaning has evolved into dismissing something quickly.

PLEASE SEND US YOUR INTRIGUING QUESTIONS ON ANY SUBJECT:

- **By email:** put "questions" in the subject line and send to caroline.ford@reachplc.com
- **By post:** to Any Questions, Daily Express, One Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5AP
- **Unfortunately we cannot reply individually, but we will feature the best questions on this page.**

forgotten verse

Jacob Wright from Ilkley, West Yorkshire, would like to read the full lyrics to a hymn he sang at school, as he can only remember the first verse.

NOW THE DAY IS OVER

Sabine Baring-Gould (1834-1924)

Now the day is over;
Night is drawing nigh;
Shadows of the evening
Steal across the sky.

Now the darkness gathers,
Stars begin to peep,
Birds and beasts and flowers
Soon will be asleep.

Jesus, give the weary
Calm and sweet repose;
With the tend'rest blessing
May mine eyelids close.

Grant to little children
Visions bright of Thee;
Guard the sailors tossing
On the deep-blue sea.

Comfort every sufferer
Watching late in pain;
Those who plan some evil,
From their sin restrain.

Through the long
nightwatches
May thine angels spread
Their bright wings above me,
Watching 'round my bed.

When the morning wakens,
Then I may arise
Pure and fresh and sinless
In Thy holy eyes.

Glory to the Father,
Glory to the Son,
And to Thee, blest Spirit,
While all ages run.

If you can't remember the words to a favourite verse or song from yesteryear, send us a snippet and we'll do our best to find all the wonderful words.

BEACHCOMBER 109 YEARS OLD AND STILL FINDING THE RIGHT WORDS...

DESIRING refinement to my predictions for 2026, I decided to browse the Oxford English Dictionary to see what additions to the language other years ending in 26 had brought. Changes to society are often reflected quickly in new words, and the OED lists 1,240 words that made their first recorded appearances in 1926.

That was the year that saw the births of Queen Elizabeth II and David Attenborough. Also, as we centenarians recall, it was the year of the General Strike and the year in which John Logie Baird gave the first public demonstration of what he called the 'televisor'. That name was rapidly modified as the first appearances of the terms 'television programme' and 'television licence' testify. 1926 also brought us the first 'handlebar moustache', 'brief-case', 'meals-on-wheels', 'tummy-ache', 'facelift' and 'sugar daddy'. It also brought to an end the 40-year sole reign of 'uncopyrightable' as the longest English word consisting entirely of different letters, which was now joined by 'dermatoglyphics', a term for handwriting analysis.

1826 brought 1,555 new words, including 'chef', 'Christmas tree', 'ginger biscuit', 'wallaby' and 'high-jumper'. It is not recorded whether the first chef had created a ginger biscuit to put at the top of his Christmas tree, but he may well have had to be a high-jumper to do so, or got a wallaby to jump up there to do it for him.

1726 must have been a dull year as it provided only 384 new English words, which included the first 'oboe', the first revelations described as 'kiss and tell' and, remarkably, the first 'pie shop'. This last occurred exactly a century after 'fast food', which might have been a reaction to the 1626 innovation of 'time-wasting'. Remarkably, the same year brought us also both cow-dung and 'pigeon-dung', though the word 'dung' itself had been with us since the early 13th century until the need to specify pigeon or cow as the culprit became necessary.

1526 saw the first 'sorcerer' and the first 'maniac', neither of whom could be accused of 'slothfulness', which would have been far more likely to be a term applied to a 'slowbelly', a term for an idle glutton.

The lesson for 2026 is clear: beware of tummy-ache caused by ginger biscuits, pie shops and other fast-food, particularly if you are a slowbelly.

The Ultimate *Helleborus Medley Collection*

BUY 12 FOR £24

GARDENERS' CHOICE

hayloft plants

Double Ellen Pink

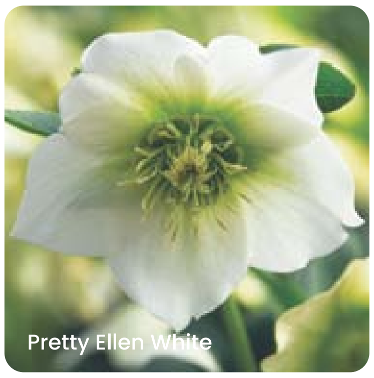
Pretty Ellen Spotted

Double Ellen Pink Spotted

Pretty Ellen Red

BUY 12 (1 OF EACH) FOR ONLY £24

Double Ellen Purple


Pretty Ellen White

Double Ellen Red

Double Ellen White

Double Ellen White Spotted

Pretty Ellen White Spotted

Pretty Ellen Pink

Double Ellen Picotee

BUY 12 PLANTS FOR 24 (THAT'S JUST £2 EACH!)

Enjoy up to 5 months of blooms from winter to spring with this selection of shade-loving Hellebores for just £2 each when you buy the collection of 12.

- A selection of single and double flowers from winter to spring
- Essential source of nectar for pollinators
- Evergreen and fully hardy down to -20°C and below
- Perfect for shady borders and containers

Your **young plants** will be delivered **direct to your door** by the **end of January**!

Naomi
Hayloft Plant Specialist

shop with **confidence**
NO QUIBBLE GUARANTEE
Trusted by over 500,000 gardeners

IT'S EASY TO ORDER

hayloft.co.uk ☎ 01386 554440 ✉ Fill in the coupon

QUOTE HAEX OR SEARCH ONLINE

First Name Surname

Address

Postcode Tel

Email

SEND TO: Hayloft Plants, FREEPOST, RTGR-JAGJ-JETG, WR10 3HB

THANK YOU, WE WILL CONFIRM YOUR ORDER

Please Send	**Item Code**	**Price**	**Qty**	**Total**
12 x Young Plants (1 of each)	K50206	£24		
24 x Young Plants (2 of each)	K50207	£42		
36 x Young Plants (3 of each)	K50208	£58		
(UK postage including Scottish Islands, Channel Islands and Northern Ireland)		Postage & Packing		£5.95
			Total	

Please debit my Visa/Mastercard

Delete as applicable: Mr / Mrs / Miss / Ms

Name on card:

Card no.

Expiry CV2

Great ★ Trustpilot ★★★★★

I enclose cheque/PO for made payable to **Hayloft Plants Ltd.**

Please write your name and address on the reverse of the cheque.

Your details are kept securely and will not be shared with third parties. You will receive a catalogue, welcome email and special offers. If you prefer not to receive them please call 01386 562999. For T&Cs - see hayloft.co.uk

Flamboyant painter and lover of life

Molly Parkin

Artist, writer and designer

BORN FEBRUARY 3, 1932 – DIED JANUARY 5, 2026, AGED 93

WITH her colourful appearance and personality Molly Parkin embodied the "Swinging Sixties" and was a true renaissance woman of the decade and beyond. She achieved success as an abstract painter and award-winning London fashion editor, published 10 "comic erotica" novels and two volumes of memoirs, and was always a popular guest on TV chat shows.

She married twice – to art dealer Michael Parkin and artist Patrick Hughes – but was equally known for her string of famous lovers, including blues singer Bo Diddley, writer John Mortimer and actor James Robertson Justice.

Her friends included the likes of Francis Bacon, Andy Warhol and George Melly.

Born in Pontycymer in the Garw Valley, Glamorgan, Wales as Molly Noyle Thomas, she came from a deeply religious family of preachers, teachers and miners.

Both her parents were alcoholics and Molly too was to suffer with the condition. Recalling her childhood, Parkin said: "It was very religious. I wasn't allowed to walk on the same side of the street as the pub." The family later bought a newsagent shop and Molly had a paper round but on her first day, a car knocked her off her bicycle, causing a severe head injury. She spent a year off school, convalescing alone in her room, drawing and painting.

Encouraged by her grandmother, at 17 she won a scholarship to Goldsmiths College of Art. By 22 she was a member of the Chelsea Arts Club and at 25 she was married. Staying home to care for her daughters, Sarah and Sophie, Parkin painted, earning "enormous amounts" and allowing her to own a Rolls-Royce and house in Chelsea.

She opened her own fashion boutique, where she made hats and bags – and also a restaurant. There was nothing she couldn't turn her flamboyant hand to. But alcohol took a grip of her when she moved into magazines in the mid-eighties, leaving her waking up literally in the gutter. After bankruptcy, she spent her last years in a council flat in the World's End estate in London, still painting and writing. A retrospective of her work was held at a gallery on the King's Road in 2017.

In 2012, Parkin was awarded a rare Civil List Pension by the Queen "for service to the arts". She said of the honour: "I was very surprised and just astonished. I was the boozing companion of Francis Bacon. I don't think I'm the type of person who gets these."

In 2019 she was diagnosed with Alzheimer's. Daughter Sophie confirmed her death, posting: "Molly Parkin... extraordinary human, has left the building". Both daughters and three grandchildren survive her.

Parkin blazed a trail in the 'Swinging Sixties' and had a string of famous lovers

Tatiana Schlossberg

Journalist

BORN MAY 5, 1990 – DIED DECEMBER 30, 2025, AGED 35

AT THE age of just 35, Tatiana became the latest victim of the so-called curse of the Kennedys.

The daughter of designer Edwin Schlossberg and diplomat Caroline Kennedy, and the granddaughter of former US President John F Kennedy, at university she was editor-in-chief of The Yale Herald and also earned a master's in American history from Jesus College, Oxford.

In an article in November in The New Yorker titled, "A Battle With My Blood", she revealed she had been diagnosed with acute myeloid leukaemia after giving birth to her second child in 2024.

She is survived by husband George Moran and their two children, Edwin, three and one-year-old Josephine.

Anne Frank's crusading 'sister'

Eva Schloss

Auschwitz survivor

BORN MAY 11, 1929 - DIED JANUARY 3, 2026, AGED 96

EVA Schloss was an Austrian Holocaust survivor, memoirist, and the stepdaughter of Otto Frank, the father of diarist Anne Frank.

She was co-founder and honorary president of the Anne Frank Trust and spoke widely about her family's experiences of the Holocaust.

She participated in the USC Shoah Foundation's Visual History Archive, recording interactive video testimony for use in educational programmes.

In the 1940s, Mrs Schloss and her family were chased from their home in Austria and lived as refugees in the Netherlands.

Her family lived opposite Anne Frank's home and like Anne, they had to go into hiding from the Nazis, spending two years underground until they were discovered and sent to Auschwitz on Eva's 15th birthday. Schloss and her mother were separated from her father and brother, who did not survive capture.

King Charles, who danced with Schloss while visiting a Jewish community centre in London, in 2022, paid tribute to her, writing: "The horrors that she endured as a young woman are impossible to comprehend and yet she devoted the rest of her life to overcoming hatred and prejudice, promoting kindness, courage, understanding and resilience through her tireless work for the Anne Frank Trust UK and Holocaust education across the world." By the time Eva and her mother Elfriede were liberated in January 1945, by the Soviet Red Army, they were barely alive.

Eva danced with King Charles, aged 93

Repatriated to Amsterdam, Elfriede married Otto Frank, who had also managed to survive internment by the Nazis.

After the war, Eva resumed her education and studied art history at the University of Amsterdam.

She travelled to England, where she studied photography and met Zvi Schloss, a Jewish refugee from Germany whose father had been imprisoned at Dachau.

They married and settled in London and had three daughters: Jacky, Caroline and Sylvia, and later became British citizens.

Schloss was appointed an MBE in 2013 and was later awarded the Medal for Services to the Republic of Austria when she resumed Austrian citizenship in 2021.

Martin Chivers

Footballer

BORN APRIL 27, 1945 – DIED JANUARY 7, 2026, AGED 80

DESCRIBED by Tottenham Hotspur as "one of the greatest goalscorers in our history, not to mention a much-loved member of the Spurs family", Martin Chivers was always a fan favourite.

The striker began his career with his hometown club Southampton, and signed for Spurs in January 1968 for a then-record transfer fee of £125,000. He scored on his debut at Sheffield Wednesday, a 30-yard volley to give Spurs a 2-1 win. Ten days later, he scored both goals when they drew 2-2 at Manchester United, the first of an incredible 174 goals for the club, a tally which still sees him sit fourth in Spurs' all-time top scorers list.

"He had an incredible turn of speed, awesome strength in the air, fantastic balance and ball control with surprising subtlety, yet with the ability to score the most spectacular goals", a statement from Spurs read.

Goal machine Martin Chivers

From 1971 to 1973, Chivers played for England, scoring 13 goals in 24 appearances.

His glorious time at Spurs came to an end in the summer of 1976, when he joined Swiss side Servette, where he spent two years and netted 38 goals, before rounding off his league career with spells at Norwich City and Brighton.

After retiring, Chivers managed clubs in England and Norway and owned a hotel in Hertfordshire. He also commentated for BBC Radio and remained a popular matchday host at White Hart Lane, where he was inducted into the Tottenham Hotspur Hall of Fame in 2007.

In 2008, he was appointed the National Development Manager to the FA and his autobiography, Big Chiv – My Goals In Life, was published in 2009.

Chivers is survived by wife Julia, sons Nick and Luke, daughters Andrea and Melanie and his grandchildren.

Written by
KAREN ROCKETT

BRITAIN'S BEST VALUE

THE AMAZING 'PORTFOLIO' EASY-TO-USE ANDROID

Touch Screen 10 Inch Tablet

with £52.92 of FREE GIFTS!

Typically sells for £200 ONLY £159.99 with FREE GIFTS WORTH £52.92

ORDER NOW! LIMITED STOCK

1 IT'S THE INTERNET AT YOUR FINGERTIPS!

Email, chat, search, shop, watch, listen, read and so much more...you're just a wi-fi connection away from all the wonders of the world wide web.

2 IT'S A FREEPHONE TO YOUR FRIENDS & FAMILY!

'What's App' your friend in West Ham, or video call your sister in Sydney, either way, it won't cost a penny! Handy, too, for letting family know you're okay.

3 IT'S A TELEVISION FOR YOUR FAVOURITE SHOWS

Watch Free to Air TV on BBC iPlayer, ITV Hub, All 4 and more...

4 IT'S A RADIO STATION DESIGNED JUST FOR YOU!

Listen to your favourite radio shows – no interference, no tuning. Just crisp, clear sound at the touch of a button.

5 IT'S A CAMERA FOR PHOTOS & VIDEOS TOO!

Actually, two cameras – front and rear – lets you take perfect pictures or off-the-cuff videos to send or share.

6 IT'S YOUR FAVOURITE BOOK OR MAGAZINE!

Find your favourite books, subscribe to your favourite magazines or listen to your favourite talking-book authors.

7 IT'S A DIARY THAT NEVER FORGETS A THING!

Got an appointment? Add it to your digital diary in seconds and set an alarm to remind you of the event.

8 IT'S A DIRECT LINE TO HEALTH ADVICE!

It's no replacement for seeing your GP, yet the web is packed with sound advice about your health & wellbeing.

9 IT'S YOUR FAVOURITE SHOP...WITH NO QUEUES!

Browse the shelves or do a weekly shop without leaving your living room. And best of all... no queues at the checkout!

10 IT'S A MONEY-SAVING DEVICE, TOO!

Compare utility prices, finance products, cars, holidays... get the best prices and honest customer reviews!

11 IT'S A POST OFFICE OR A BANK IN YOUR HOME!

Check your account, make transfers, reserve foreign money, apply for a loan...all 100% safe and secure.

12 IT'S A NON-STOP 24-HR VIDEO NEWSPAPER!

Whether you want to know what's happening around the world or around the corner, access up-to-the-minute, as-it-happens news events.

13 IT'S A SCHOOL FOR LEARNING ANYTHING!

You're never to old to learn something new. Become a barista, barber or bugle player... the internet has it all!

Why this Portfolio TABLET THAT BEGINNERS WILL LOVE could be just what the doctor ordered!

Getting online with this easy-to-use 10-inch touch-screen tablet can seriously reduce the risks of loneliness & depression among senior citizens

It seems at odds with today's modern, highly-connected world that many people of a certain age should suffer from the consequences of living on your own.

Yet for those who live alone this lack of interaction with others can result in less mental and physical stimulation.

With fewer opportunities to engage with friends and family, those crucial social connections can become fragmented or even lost altogether.

Access to technology such as smart phones or computer tablets, can help to significantly reduce the risk of loneliness, depression and cognitive decline often associated with the older generation.

This easy-to-use Portfolio 10" tablet is designed for ANYONE who would like to get online, but isn't quite sure how to go about it.

With simple, jargon-free instructions, you'll be amazed at how easily this tablet can turn the fear and anxiety of getting online into a surprisingly joyful experience.

Connecting with friends and family, old and new, has never been easier. You never know... you might even have some FUN!

14 IT'S AN ATLAS OF THE WORLD...AND MORE!

From Australia to Zimbabwe and everywhere inbetween...zoom in on your world with global maps and amazing satellite views. And it doesn't stop there...explore the stars and planets, too...infinity and beyond!

15 IT'S A SATNAV THAT KNOWS EVERY ROUTE

With built-in GPS software, this clever tablet can tell you the most direct route to ANY destination on the map. It can tell you how long it's going to take you to get there, either on foot, in your car or by using public transport! You'll never get lost again!

16 IT'S A PHOTO ALBUM THAT LASTS FOREVER!

Share, send and receive your favourite photos and videos with ease. Let them live online – only if you choose – and they'll be there forever!

17 IT'S A CROSSWORD, SUDOKU AND MORE!

Crossword connoisseur? Word puzzle wizard? Crack number-cruncher? You will find an app that lets you play 'til your heart's content and challenge your friends to a game, too!

18 IT'S A RECIPE BOOK FOR ANY MEAL TIME!

What's for dinner? Cook up a feast from far or near with endless online recipes, meal ideas and cooking tips. Don't fancy cooking? Whether you want pizza or Peking duck, ordering online is fast, easy, safe and secure.

19 IT'S AN ABSOLUTE STEAL AT JUST £159.99!

Designed to be sold at retail for £200, this incredible, fully-loaded 10" touch-screen tablet can be yours today – *only from this exclusive newspaper offer* – for just £159.99, a huge saving of £40.
Order now by phone, post or online.

Pressplay Ltd (Dept M01187), Unit 7A, Chelmsford Road Ind Est, Great Dunmow, Essex CM6 1HD.
Satisfaction Guarantee: If you are not totally satisfied with your purchase, simply return the product within 14 days of receipt for a full refund.

Call centre opening hours
Mon-Sat 7am-9pm; Sun 8am-8pm. **0800 472 5311** DISCOUNT CODE M01187
Speak to someone in our UK Call Centre who will assist with your order
Or order easily online at: **www.pressplayshop.co.uk/bundle**

> *"My son bought it for me as a gift. I video called him to say thanks and he was so impressed! Now we talk every day and I can watch the grandkids grow up, too. A thoughtful gift that has had such a positive impact on my life."*
>
> **Janet Quinn, 63, nr Banbury**

ADD A PROTECTIVE KEYBOARD WALLET WITH BUILT-IN STAND!

Your tablet has an on-screen keyboard for typing emails etc, yet some people still prefer a traditional keyboard. A USB cable connects the keyboard to your tablet instantly, and the protective leather-look case with built-in stand makes typing more convenient and allows for easy 'hands-free' viewing of TV shows, movies, digital books and more.

FREE GIFT worth £39.95

PLUS...ESSENTIAL READING!

'One Step at a Time' is a treasure trove of tips and tricks! Written in simple, straightforward, jargon-free English, it explains everything you'll need to know, from swiping the screen to finding hidden options. This unmissable book also explains the terminology and language that new technology has made its own.
A must-read for tech newbies!

FREE GIFT worth £12.97

THE TECHNICAL STUFF!

- **Features two SIM card slots giving you both internet on-the-go AND mobile phone options**
- **Big 10-inch touch screen 1280x800 display**
- **Built-in 5-megapixel rear-facing camera for still shots and video, PLUS front-facing camera for face-to-face video calls, selfies and more!**
- **Built-in fast Quad core Android 9 Processor**
- **32 Gigabyte (Gb) hard drive. Can expand to 64Gb using optional SD storage cards**
- **GPS can plan a route to any destination**
- **Bluetooth connection to other devices**
- **5000mAh rechargeable long-life battery**
- **Super slimline, lightweight design (below)...it's the perfectly portable go-anywhere tablet!**

— Super slim side view —

UPGRADE! UPGRADE!

JUST ARRIVED!

NEW SUPERIOR SPECIFICATION PORTFOLIO ANDROID 10" TABLET WITH SUPERFAST OPERATING SYSTEM, 4G COMPATABILITY, 32GB MEMORY, 6,000MAH EXTRA LONG BATTERY LIFE AND SUPERIOR FRONT & BACK CAMERAS FOR GREAT SELFIES AND HIGH-QUALITY PHOTOS

DESIGNED TO SELL FOR £250 **ONLY £199.99**

WITH FREE KEYBOARD WALLET & STAND, PLUS SELF-HELP BOOK WORTH £12.97!
BE QUICK – VERY LIMITED STOCK!

1: PLEASE SEND ME TICKED ITEMS:

☐ My 32Gb 10" Tablet with FREE Keyboard Wallet & Stand, plus my FREE copy of 'One Step At A Time', the bestselling instruction book. That's over £250 worth of value, yours today only for just £159.99 + ☐ £6.95 standard p&p or ☐ £9.95 priority delivery

UPGRADE TO SUPERIOR VERSION:

☐ Android 10" – Upgraded cameras, battery and connectivity with free Keyboard Wallet & stand plus FREE "One Step At A Time" instruction book. £199.99 + ☐ £6.95 standard p&p or ☐ £9.95 priority delivery

Additional Items can be purchased, tick if required:

☐ One Nano Screen Protector £14.95
☐ Extra 32GB Portable Storage Card £19.99

2: WHERE WOULD YOU LIKE US TO SEND YOUR TABLET?

M01187

Name:
Address:
Postcode:
Email:
Mobile No: Only used for delivery / courier alerts

3: HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO PAY?

☐ Cheque or Postal Order (payable to Pressplay Ltd with name and address on back)
☐ Debit /Credit Card No:
Security Code
Last 3 digits on back
Start Date
Expiry Date
Issue No.
Maestro Only

PRESSPLAY LTD, Dept M01187, Unit 7A, Chelmsford Rd Ind. Est., Great Dunmow, Essex CM6 1HD.
Or call our freephone orderline on: 0800 472 5311, or visit www.pressplayshop.co.uk/bundle

Estimated despatch within 48 hours from receipt of your order but please allow up to 7 working days for delivery. *Only mainland UK areas – check your post code with our operator. By engaging with our services, your contact details may be shared with trusted partners for relevant marketing. You can opt out of marketing anytime, withdraw consent easily and your data won't be shared without permission. By placing your order, you agree to this use. Learn more or update preferences at pressplayshop.co.uk Registered Office: Pressplay Ltd, Manchester M17 1WD Co Reg No 02712382.

Explore the magnificent Severn

CRUISE CONTROL: Relax and unwind on board English Holiday Cruises' Edward Elgar

By **Nick Dalton**

A RIVER cruise holiday in England? Very much so – and it's one that unfolds gently, day by day, through some of the country's most quietly beautiful and historic landscapes on the serene River Severn.

English Holiday Cruises' Edward Elgar is an intimate, classic river vessel carrying only 22 guests, sailing from Gloucester on three to six-night voyages that combine the ease of a cruise with the interest of a fully arranged touring holiday. It's a timeless style of travel: unhurried, sociable and deeply rooted in the English countryside.

Picture drifting through the green and pleasant land between the Cotswolds and the Malverns, hills rising softly on the skyline, life on board settling into a comforting rhythm of good food, conversation and ever-changing scenery. Relaxation is at the heart with a wonderfully convivial atmosphere – morning coffee in the lounge, a glass of something chilled on the sun deck, or shared discoveries ashore turning fellow travellers into friends.

Cruises, from April to October, explore varied stretches of the river, each with their own character. Later sailings see the landscape mellow from vibrant green to soft autumn gold, adding a different, quieter beauty. The Classic Severn Cruise covers the 90-mile navigable length from Gloucester to Stourport-on-Severn and back, a gently unstructured experience. Guests are delivered to riverside towns and cities, free to explore at their own pace, with Sudeley Castle the only arranged excursion.

Alongside this are cruises with included tours. The English Gardens Cruise, a highlight of spring, visits the formal canals of 18th-century Westbury Court Garden, the sweeping grounds of Spetchley Park and the RHS spring show in Malvern. The English Vineyards and Wine Tasting Cruise combines picturesque vineyard tastings with a visit to Fox's Kiln gin distillery in Gloucester, celebrating the region's food and drink scene. Other cruises celebrate classic motoring, historic railways and English heritage.

Along the way are the cathedral cities of Gloucester and Worcester, the birdlife of Slimbridge Wetland Centre and the traditional craftsmanship of Morgan Motor Company. Ship Canal Explorer trips navigate Gloucester and Sharpness Canal – the world's first ship canal – while Severn Vale Discovery voyages combine river and canal.

Edward Elgar is a floating country hotel, with a friendly crew and welcoming public spaces. Cabins, all with comfortable twin beds, are a pleasure to relax in, though most guests prefer to be up early, enjoying the scenery. So much is included: cooked breakfasts, relaxed lunches and four-course dinners, along with house wines, spirits, beers, mixers and soft drinks. Tea, coffee and cake are always on hand, and evenings often feature quizzes or live entertainment.

This is an easy-going corner of England explored by water – locks, hills, birdlife and market towns enjoyed at an easy pace and brought to life by cruises that turn gentle travel into something truly memorable.

Rediscover
England
English Holiday Cruises
VisitEngland
Quality Assessed
ABTOT
Member 5609

Join a River Cruise Holiday in the Beautiful Severn Vale

- Luxury hotel boat cruises up to 22 passengers.
- New destinations daily. 3-6 nights long.
- Traditional English food, special diets welcomed.
- Includes food, drink, tours & more - no hidden extras.
- Moorings close to tours or transport provided.
- Cosy twin cabins - climate control, windows, ensuite.
- All deposits financially protected.
- Pre-cruise hotel packages available.

FREE BROCHURE: Call 01452 410411
englishholidaycruises.co.uk

Puzzled?

PROBLEMS TO TEST YOUR BRAIN POWER

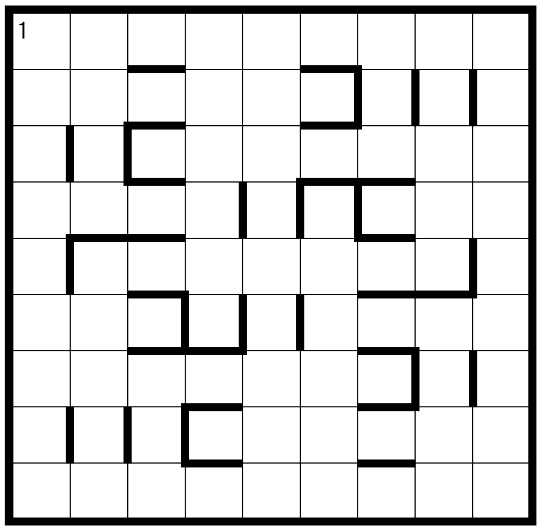
MAKE YOU VERY CROSSWORD

ACROSS

1 Lengths (9)
Military officer (7)
Hardwood (4)
Broad smile (4)
Demand firmly (6)
Person in charge of a ship (7)
The elders (anag.) (9)
Tropical forest (6)
Eight-armed sea creature (7)
Peaked hat (3)
Beer (3)

DOWN

1 Diverts (9)
Temporarily halted (9)
Motor (6)
Paul _, former England footballer (4)
Amuse (6)
Come into conflict (5)
Person who travels to space (9)
Lazy (4)
Edgar Allan _, writer (3)
Sports trophy (3)
Level (5)



For today's solution call:
0907 181 2581

**Calls cost 80p per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge.*

LAST SATURDAY'S SOLUTION

ACROSS Prettiest, Remark, Plaster, Clue, Lee, Consist, Dam, Root, Uniform, Broken, Electrons.
DOWN Procedure, Real, Talent, Transport, Eat, Sweet, Threatens, Mirror, Canal, Open, Ice.

**SP: Spoke – Helpline 0333 202 3390*

Winter Sale

Reader Offer in partnership with Yimbly.com

MAKE TRICKY CLEANING JOBS A BREEZE

Save 53%
Now £14.09 was £29.99
Scan to order online

The Pocket Vac is a game-changer in portable cleaning. Weighing under 300g, this 2-in-1 cordless vacuum and air blower is perfect for quick, powerful clean-ups at home, in the car, or anywhere. Its strong 2700pa suction tackles everything from pet hair to crumbs with ease.

Switch effortlessly between vacuum and blower modes to blast away debris or suck it up. With handy attachments like the crevice nozzle and bristle nozzle, you can reach every corner. The long-lasting lithium-ion battery ensures wireless freedom, while the eco-friendly washable HEPA filters reduce waste and save money. Compact and easy to store, the Pocket Vac makes cleaning fast and convenient, wherever you go!

- ✓ 2700pa suction power
- ✓ Fast charging
- ✓ Long-lasting battery
- ✓ 4 multi-use attachments

yimbly.com/Offer37 Quote **Offer37** Offer ends 1st February

UK Customer Service 0161 444 9879 | Now Open 7 Days a Week

Offers subject to availability. Terms and Conditions apply. Free Delivery over £50. Customer Service operates 9.00am - 5.00pm, Monday - Friday, and 9.00am - 1.00pm, Saturday and Sunday, except on Bank Holidays. Calls are charged at your standard network rate. Visit yimbly.com/terms for full details, including Delivery & Returns information. For queries, contact support@yimbly.com.

Trustpilot ★★★★☆

ALPHAPUZZLE™

A B	■	2	■	1	■	18	■	21	■	■	■	21	■
C D	■	21	3	2	22	17	16	1	■	1	21	19	8
E F	■	16	■	21	■	23	■	15	■	4	■	8	■
G ~~H~~	24	8	8	16	■	23	16	8	4	10	8	3	18
I J	■	1	■	■	■	8	■	8	■	8	■	10	■
K L	10	1	21	26	15	8	■	7	8	8	7	8	20
M N	■	■	■	8	■	■	■	■	■	5	■	■	■
O P	21	18	18	8	3	20	■	2	16	8	2	22	8
Q R	■	10	■	1	■	21	■	14	■	■	■	21	■
S T	2	16	17	11	3	6	3	25	■	9	6	15	12
U V	■	18	■	21	■	3	■	3	■	21	■	19	■
W ~~X~~	23	15	8	13	■	18	16	8	21	2	15	8	■
Y Z	■	8	■	■	■	14	■	18	■	8	■	20	■

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
												X
14	**15**	**16**	**17**	**18**	**19**	**20**	**21**	**22**	**23**	**24**	**25**	**26**
								H				

Alphapuzzle® tests logic and word power. Each grid number represents a letter. Every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter or letters – below the main grid – to start. **Solution next Saturday.**

Difficulty: 6/10 **Target:** 21 mins

Clue: Splashes said to be attached to a plug

THINKING SPACE

For up to six Extra Letter clues:
0907 181 2567*
(deduct two minutes for each clue letter heard)

Today's full solution: **0907 181 2566***
*Calls cost 80p per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge.

Alternatively, for six extra letter clues direct to your mobile, text **DSXALPHA** to **64343.** Texts cost £1 plus your standard network rate.

LAST SATURDAY'S SOLUTION

ACROSS Desk, Platypus, Voucher, Await, Table, Notion, Impose, Paunch, Dredge, Safer, Abuse, Drizzle, Greedily, Cyan (clue).
DOWN Dovetail, Gang, Squib, Perjure, Cheers, Dread, Larynx, Feudal, Tract, Abseil, Platoon, Fizzy, Site, Thirteen.

Alphapuzzle® ©2025 Acorn Editorial Ltd. All words appear in Chambers Dictionary.

CAN YOU TACKLE THE EXTRA TOUGH ULTRA ALPHAPUZZLE® IN THE SUNDAY EXPRESS EVERY WEEK?

PENTALETTA

I		S
	P	
L		E

Can you find 25 or more words containing only the five letters shown on the left? Each word must include the letter in the centre, in this case P, and must contain at least four letters, but there is no limit on the number of times you can use a letter in any word. Your list should include a nine-letter word that's alert.

Average mark: 25 words • **Good:** 31 words
Excellent: 37 words • **Incredible:** 41 words

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION: added, dame, dammed, data, date, dated, dead, madam, madame, made, mama, mamma, mammae, mammee, mate, mated, matt, matte, matted, mead, meat, tame, tamed, tatted, team, teamed, teat.
The clued word was: TEAMMATE

SUDOKU

9		7	5			3		
			9				5	
5		6	4		2	8		
	6		2			7		4
				3				
2			6				8	1
		9	8		5	1		3
	5				1			
		4		2	9	5		6

Fill the grid so that every column, row, and 3x3 square includes all the digits from 1 to 9.
Level: Moderate
Target: 24 mins

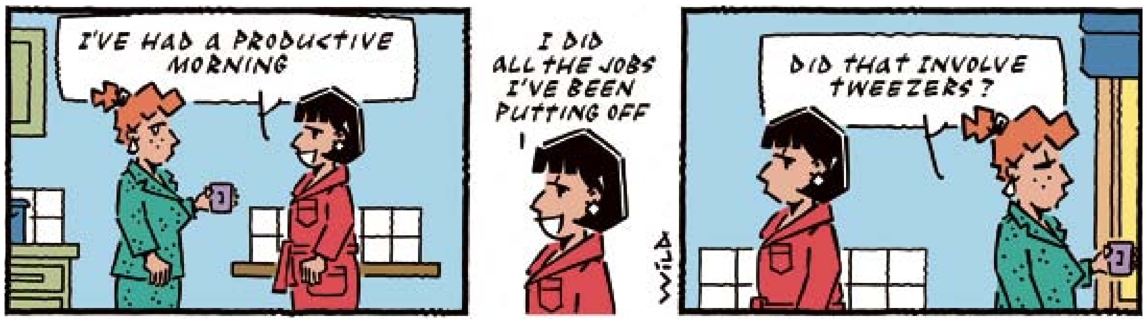
LAST SATURDAY'S SOLUTION

7	1	2	8	3	5	9	6	4
3	5	8	9	6	4	2	1	7
9	4	6	2	7	1	3	8	5
1	2	3	7	5	6	8	4	9
4	9	7	3	8	2	6	5	1
6	8	5	4	1	9	7	2	3
5	7	1	6	9	8	4	3	2
8	3	4	1	2	7	5	9	6
2	6	9	5	4	3	1	7	8

For extra clues call:
0901 322 5603
**Calls cost 75p plus your telephone company's network access charge.*

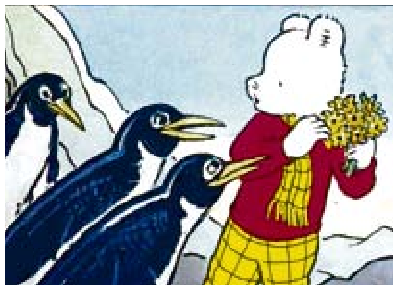
For today's full solution
call: 0907 181 2575
**Calls cost 80p per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge.*

FAITH, HOPE AND SUE Lisa Wild


I'VE HAD A PRODUCTIVE MORNING
I DID ALL THE JOBS I'VE BEEN PUTTING OFF
WILD
DID THAT INVOLVE TWEEZERS?

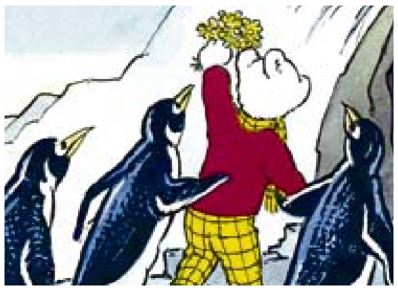
RUPERT AND THE PENGUINS No 7

To order the New Rupert Bear Soft Toy (30cm – Rainbow Designs) at £14.99 please call 01872 562315: or order on www.classicrupertbearshop.com. UK P & P £4.95.



"Don't eat them! These are meant to bloom! They're kingcups for my Mummy's room."

To Rupert's astonishment, the penguins approach him eagerly, and soon they are poking their beaks into his bunch of flowers. "Hey!" he exclaims. "These aren't for eating! They're not vegetables. These are flowers called kingcups. I picked them for my Mummy." Rupert gets no further, for at the mention of the word "kingcups" the penguins get really excited. "Kingcups!" they squawk. "Enter, little bear!" And, excitedly, they lead Rupert into the cave.

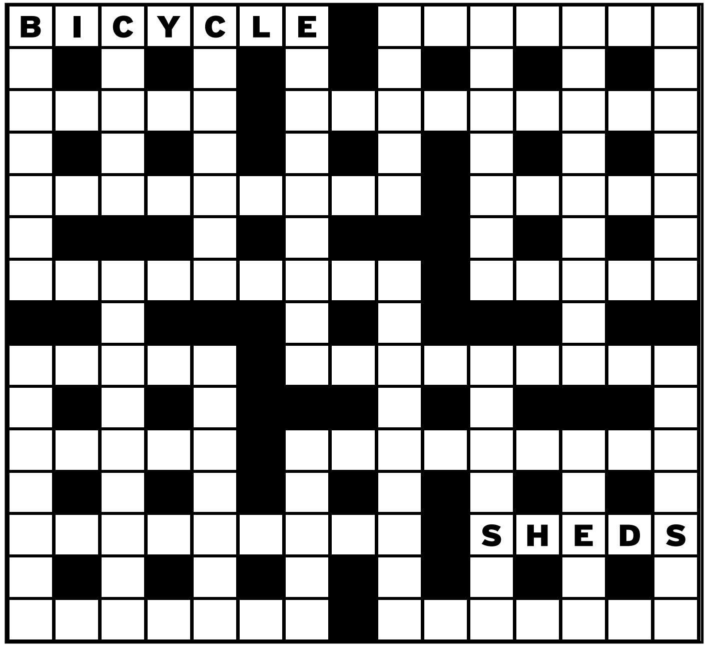


"Kingcups! Kingcups! Did you say?" The birds squawk: "Please come this way!"

THE SUNSHINE PUZZLE

The Sunshine Puzzle has been a firm favourite with readers of the Express for many years. All you need to do is find the correct home for the listed words. We have helped you by placing two. Here are the words that go into the grid:

ACIDS
CLOWN
FAILS
FIELD
IDEAL
SHEDS
SINCE
SKIES
STUNT
THORN
ARTISTS
BATTLES
BICYCLE
BLOSSOM
CONQUER
DEEPEST
DISEASE
DRESSES
FLAPPED
FOSSILS
SAMPLES
SINGERS
APOLOGISE
CARDBOARD
ENERGETIC
EXISTENCE
IMITATION
LANGUAGES
PENINSULA
PRECISION
SEPARATES
SURROUNDS



For today's solution call: **0907 181 2584**

**Calls cost 80p per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge.*

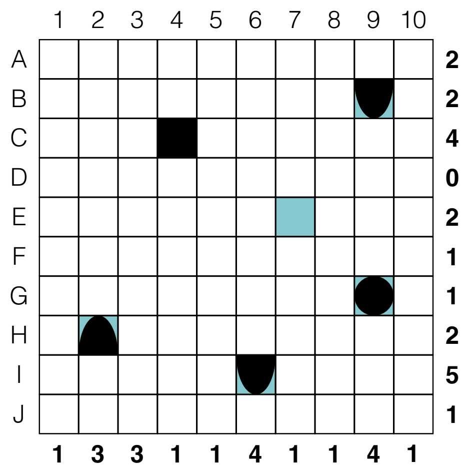
LAST SATURDAY'S SOLUTION

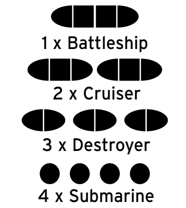
ACROSS Crocodile, Cargo, Illiberal, Valet, Print, Kilometre, Eider, Agreeable, Face value, Paean, Boathouse, Acute, Sauna, Air guitar, Bathe, Innermost. **DOWN** Ruler, Clientele, Deer, Leading question, Aware, Guerrilla, Bowel, Inamorata, Anarchism, Carol, Tenth, Tears, Ogre.

THE DAILY EXPRESS 30-SECOND CHALLENGE

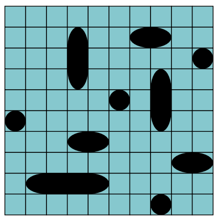
TODAY'S ANSWERS: BEGINNER = 66; INTERMEDIATE = 96; ADVANCED = 194.

BATTLESHIPS



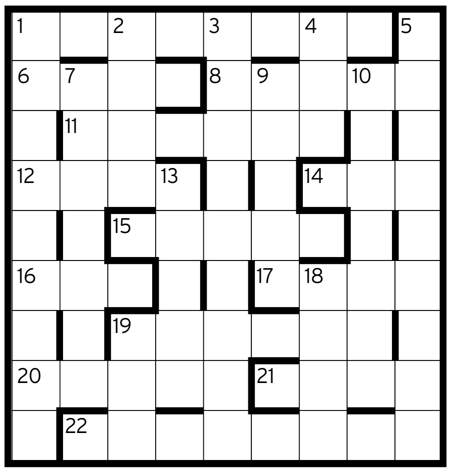


LAST SATURDAY'S SOLUTION



FIND where the fleet of ships shown is hidden in the grid. The numbers to the right of and below the grid indicate how many of the squares in that row are filled in with ships or parts of ships. The ships do not touch each other, even diagonally. Some squares have been filled in to start you off.

SMALL CROSSWORD



ACROSS
1 Epoch-making (8)
6 Greasy (4)
8 Tranquillity (5)
11 Contemporary (6)
12 Taps lightly (4)
14 Supernatural being (3)
15 Grilled bread (5)
16 _ Henman, retired tennis player (3)
17 Always (4)
19 Elevates (6)
20 Find out (5)
21 Quote (4)
22 Illegal importer (8)

DOWN
1 Buildings where the sick are cared for (9)
2 Narrow aperture (4)
3 Performing surgery (9)
4 _ Fleming, author (3)
5 Refer romp (anag.) (9)
7 Visualise (7)
9 Delete (5)
10 Most chilly (7)
13 Relating to the sun (5)
18 Face covering (4)
19 Male sheep (3)

For today's solution call: **0907 181 2583**

**Calls cost 80p per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge.*

LAST SATURDAY'S SOLUTION

ACROSS 1 Emphasis, 6 Film, 8 Nylon, 11 Tunnel, 12 Ease, 14 Bat, 15 Laura, 16 Tin, 17 Sign, 19 Secure, 20 Ankle, 21 Hose, 22 Migrants.
DOWN 1 Effectual, 2 Plus, 3 Announcer, 4 Ill, 5 Instances, 7 Italian, 9 Years, 10 Oranges, 13 Easel, 18 Iron, 19 Ski.

TARGET

Z	I	R
Z	N	A
L	G	F

HOW many words of four letters or more can you make from the letters shown here? In making a word, each letter may be used once only. Each must contain the centre letter and there must be at least one nine-letter word. No plurals. Verb forms ending in "s" permitted.

TODAY'S TARGET
Good 16; **very good** 24; **excellent** 31 (or more). **Solution next Saturday.**

LAST SATURDAY'S SOLUTION

anew, awake, awaken, **AWAKENING**, awaking, awing, awning, gawk, gnaw, gnawn, knew, wage, wain, wake, waken, wakening, waking, wane, waning, weak, wean, weaning, wine, wing, wink

Call **0907 181 2586** for today's Target solution

**Calls cost 80p per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge. All puzzles use The Chambers Dictionary*

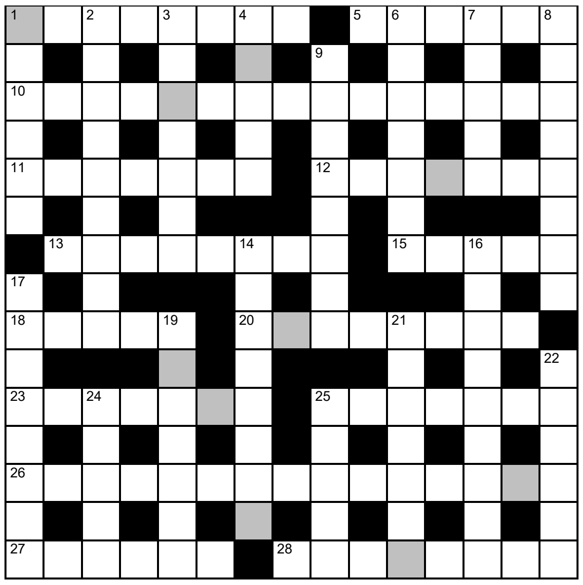
CRUSADER CROSSWORD

WIN £100

FOR YOUR CHANCE TO WIN £100 CASH read down the letters in the highlighted squares to reveal the mystery word

ACROSS
1 Bloke I heal with treatment for the hands (8)
5 Soft wool of second rabbit-like animal, say (6)
10 More depressed by broken nose on spectacles, become less ambitious (5,4,6)
11 Disapprove of awful red pole (7)
12 Opposed to saint following once more (7)
13 European pairs Dan confused (8)
15 Some side always perfect (5)
18 Leave the car with a jacket (5)
20 Left at sea with artist, it creates picture (8)
23 Person handling payments for his race, possibly (7)
25 Remark initially made by guys in small bed (7)
26 It meant irate one upset French queen (5,10)
27 Unimportant person making boy nod unexpectedly (6)
28 Charge for borrowing money is concern (8)

DOWN
1 Mother with woman making complaint (6)
2 Desperate peer pawns publication (9)
3 Box containing ring and humorous drawing (7)
4 Rage about man finally revealing selection (5)
6 Old equipment found on a motorway with Japanese art (7)
7 A small fowl, grey (5)
8 Relocate taking funny letters east (8)
9 I defame inhabitant of Iona, e.g. (8)
14 A quiet mother or father, plain (8)
16 Long film in French, on time, about earthquake's origin (9)
17 Scene imp spoils, for example (8)
19 I'd seen a misplaced flavouring (7)
21 A new Conservative in Italian city having love affair (7)
22 First of teenagers about to enter group's road (6)
24 Plant used for unusual brush (5)
25 Cold short northern circus entertainer (5)



TO ENTER: Call **0904 161 3700** (calls cost £1.50 plus your telephone company's network access charge) and leave your answer and details, or text **DXCRUS** followed by a space, your answer, name and address details to **88833** (texts cost £1.50 plus your standard network rate). Lines close at midnight tonight. Or send your grid containing the answer in the shaded squares by posting it to: Crusader Crossword, January 10, PO Box 8694, Derby DE1 9TW. Entries must be postmarked by January 12 at the latest. For any postal enquiries, call helpline number. An extra day is given for postal entries during bank holidays. SP: Spoke – 0333 202 3390.

● ***One weekly winner will be the first random correct entry drawn from all entry routes after the closing date of midnight tonight. Competition runs Sunday to Saturday. The Editor's decision is final.***

NEED HELP? Call **0904 161 1609** for 5 extra clues! Calls cost £1.50 plus your telephone company's network access charge.

NAME

ADDRESS

POSTCODE

Weekly Crusader Crossword Winner
21-27 December: A Clarke, Worthing;
Please allow 30 days for prizes to arrive

LAST SATURDAY'S SOLUTION

ACROSS 1 Semester, 5 Sarong, 10 Air chief marshal, 11 Doubles, 12 Undergo, 13 Migrated, 15 Ensue, 18 Rolls, 20 Merchant, 23 Gallery, 25 Pattern, 26 Take to one's heels, 27 Resort, 28 Jettison.
DOWN 1 Shandy, 2 Marsupial, 3 Scholar, 4 Evens, 6 Abridge, 7 Other, 8 Galloped, 9 Smoulder, 14 Tommyrot, 16 Senseless, 17 Brighter, 19 Shelter, 21 Hatchet, 22 Unison, 24 Likes, 25 Piece. **Prizeword:** Stinginess.

GET THE BRILLIANT EXPRESS PUZZLES APP ON YOUR PHONE TODAY!

THE ALPHABEATER

CAN you crack the Alphabeater? It's a tough twist on our popular Alphapuzzle, designed to stretch your mental muscles to the limit. Each grid number below represents a letter or a black square. As in Alphapuzzle, every letter of the alphabet is used. But now you have to complete the grid too! Use the given letters and the given black squares below the main grid to start.

To add to the fiendish fun, Alphabeater is 'rotationally symmetrical'. In other words the grid is the same if you turn the page upside down. So, for example if there is a six-letter word Across which starts in the top left corner, there will be a corresponding six-letter word Across which ends in the bottom right corner square. Every black square has a symmetrical 'twin' but the 'twin' may not always share the same number. This can help identify other black squares. Of course if the centre square is black it has no corresponding 'twin'. Solution next Saturday.

A **B**	35	14	33	4	1	7	10	13	13	1	19	12	9
C **D**	10	19	6	6	25	10	4	37	3	16	12	2	17
E **F**	8	5	34	16	40	33	29	25	19	11	23	13	21
~~**G**~~ **H**	36	38	21	9	13	21	32	23	4	3	13	20	13
I **J**	7	12	32	20	21	26	18	19	12	13	15	39	6
K **L**	29	39	5	23	17	2	8	5	17	26	12	35	39
~~**M**~~ **N**	19	3	25	34	15	39	36	39	27	20	39	16	22
O **P**	31	33	12	8	2	11	17	4	2	13	6	40	11
Q **R**	38	12	29	19	37	13	21	8	21	34	3	19	8
S **T**	6	26	13	20	16	37	2	14	13	37	19	12	9
U **V**	39	12	23	19	30	38	13	35	31	8	35	9	3
W **X**	33	24	23	17	2	39	17	29	19	15	18	6	22
Y ~~**Z**~~	9	15	19	28	28	6	22	34	23	3	26	22	16

1	2	3	4 ■	5	6	7	8	9 G	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18 M	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28 Z	29	30	31	32	33	34 ■	35	36	37	38	39	40

Target Time: 34 minutes

Today's full solution
0907 181 2557
Extra letter clues
0907 181 2559
Today's full solution
0907 181 2557
Extra letter clues
0907 181 2559
Call for up to six extra letter clues. (Deduct three minutes for each extra letter heard.) Callers will also be given two black square numbers free of any target time penalty.
*Calls cost 80p per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge.
Alternatively, for six Extra Letter clues direct to your mobile, text **DSXBEAT** to **64343.**
Texts cost £1 plus your standard network rate.

LAST SATURDAY'S SOLUTION Black squares: 1, 5, 8, 11, 12, 16, 19, 23, 24, 26, 27, 34, 36, 37. **Across:** Dutch, Courage, Fatal, Anchovies, Zero, Euro, Somehow, Gaze, Defy, Actuaries, Timid, Jukebox, Bulky. **Down:** Zeugma, Usage, Club, Obsequies, Hula, Norm, Argon, Moths, Hive, Stub, Previewed, Ague, Flick, Sloppy.

TRAILFINDERS

THE TRAVEL EXPERTS

TAILORMADE TRAVEL WORLDWIDE
020 7408 9010

CRUISE TRAILFINDERS
020 7408 9020

FIRST & BUSINESS CLASS TRAVEL
020 7408 9030

ALL YOUR TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS TAKEN CARE OF IN ONE PLACE

It's good to talk, say hello to the **fastest booking engine** in travel

Call to talk through your plans and order your *NEW TRAILFINDER* magazine filled with offers

TF TRUST

ATOL LICENCE: 1458
caa.co.uk

Trustpilot ★★★★★
No.1 TOUR OPERATOR

2025 Which? Awards TRAVEL BRAND OF THE YEAR

IATA

CYBER ESSENTIALS CERTIFIED

FIND YOUR BEACH ESCAPE...

Marvellous Maldives

10 nights from **£1,799†**

Flights, 4★ beach resort incl full board and speedboat transfers

• Calm azure waters brimming with exotic marine life

SPECIAL OFFER 30% room discount, a FREE room upgrade & FREE return speedboat transfers – saving over £1,650 per couple

Tantalising Thailand

12 nights from **£1,149†**

Flights, 4★ Phuket beach resort incl breakfast and private transfers

• Situated on a lush hillside just a short walk from magnificent Karon beach

SPECIAL OFFER 15% room discount & a FREE room upgrade – saving over £300 per couple

Magnificent Mexico

7 nights from **£1,699†**

Direct flights, 5★ **all inclusive** beach resort and private transfers

• Set on a secluded stretch of white sand beach between Cancun and the Riviera Maya • Exclusive all suite adults only resort • An oceanfront sanctuary of luxury and sophistication • A diverse spectrum of restaurants

TF'S TOP PICK

2 Weeks in Canada for £999

FIND YOUR NEXT TOURING DESTINATION...

Essential Vietnam & Cambodia

17 nights from **£1,999†**

Flights, 1 night pre-tour hotel and 17 day guided small group adventure tour incl 14 nights hotels, 1 night junk boat, 1 night sleeper train, shared transport, tour leader, activities/excursions & 20 meals

• Sail on a junk boat through Halong Bay • Float through the Mekong Delta • Enjoy sunrise over breathtaking Angkor Wat

TF EXCLUSIVE 15% tour discount – saving over £450 per person

Classic Sri Lanka

8 nights from **£1,749†**

Flights and 9 day private tour incl 8 nights 3★ to 4★ hotels, private vehicle & guide, activities/excursions & 15 meals

• Climb the spectacular rock fortress of Sigiriya • Venture to the historic former capital city of Polonnaruwa • Visit Kandy's bustling market • Enjoy a game drive in Minneriya NP

Simply Japan

13 nights from **£4,849†**

Flights and 14 day guided small group adventure tour incl 11 nights hotels, 1 night monastery & 1 night minshuku, tour leader, shared transport, activities/excursions & 14 meals

• Explore the Samurai district • Discover ancient and modern Tokyo • Visit the island of Miyajima

TF EXCLUSIVE 10% tour discount – saving over £400 per person

Classic Costa Rica

12 nights from **£3,199†**

Flights and 13 day private tour incl 12 nights hotels, private & shared transport & guides, activities/excursions & 17 meals

• Experience a huge variety of wildlife including monkeys, sloths and many species of colourful birds • Visit relaxing hot springs • Take a leisurely guided hike in Manuel Antonio NP

FIND YOUR HOLIDAY INSPIRATION...

South Africa's Classic Garden Route & Safari

15 nights from **£2,799†**

Flights, 4★+ hotels, 13 days car hire, Cape Point Peninsula Tour, shared game drives, 21 meals, selected alcoholic drinks on days 14-16 and private arrival transfer

SPECIAL OFFER 2 FREE nights – saving over £900 per couple

Australia's Western Wonders

17 nights from **£2,399†**

Direct flights, 5★ Perth hotel and 15 nights motorhome hire

• Enjoy the freedom of a motorhome holiday • Swim with incredible marine life in Monkey Mia and Shark Bay • Drive through the moonscape of the Pinnacles Desert • Explore the impressive gorges and sandstone rock arches in Kalbarri NP

Passage to Paradise Caribbean Cruise

9 nights from **£4,349◊**

Direct flights, 2 nights 4★ Miami hotel, 7 nights Regent Seven Seas® cruise incl fine dining, all drinks, onboard gratuities, free laundry service, a selection of shore excursions & unlimited wi-fi and private transfers

New Zealand's Kiwis, Hobbits & Whales

16 nights from **£2,749***

Flights, 2 nights 4★ Auckland hotel, 11 nights motorhome hire, All Blacks Experience, Cathedral Cove Kayaking Tour, Hobbiton Movie Set Tour, Kiwi Encounter, Te Puia Thermal Reserve, Kaikōura Swim with Dolphins, Mount John Observatory Tour, 3 nights 4★ Queenstown hotel and Interislander Ferry

THE ORIGINAL FLIGHT EXPERTS

WHEREVER AND WHENEVER... TRUST TRAILFINDERS TO TAKE CARE OF YOU

	ECONOMY	*BUSINESS*
LONDON KENSINGTON	020 7938 3939	020 7938 3444
LONDON CITY	020 7628 7628	020 7628 2345
LONDON CANARY WHARF	020 7147 5300	020 7147 5344
LONDON WEST END	020 7408 9000	020 7408 9044
LONDON EALING	020 8799 0400	020 8799 0447
LONDON RICHMOND	020 8799 0444	020 8799 0445
LONDON KINGSTON	0204 613 6000	0204 613 6044
ABERDEEN	01224 578 600	01224 578 644
BATH	01225 724 000	01225 724 044
BELFAST	028 9027 1888	028 9027 1844
BIRMINGHAM	0121 236 1234	0121 236 3444
BOURNEMOUTH	01202 411 600	01202 411 644
BRIGHTON	01273 715 500	01273 715 544
BRISTOL	0117 929 9000	0117 929 1036
CAMBRIDGE	01223 461 600	01223 448 188
CANTERBURY	01227 865 700	01227 865 744
CARDIFF	02920 726 600	02920 726 644
CARLISLE	01228 471 100	01228 471 044
CHELMSFORD	01245 961 400	01245 961 361
CHELTENHAM	01242 437 372	01242 437 384
CHESTER	01244 888 777	01244 888 744
EDINBURGH	0131 243 2800	0131 243 2844
EXETER	01392 458 200	01392 458 244
GLASGOW	0141 353 2224	0141 353 2400
GUILDFORD	01483 478 400	01483 478 444
LEEDS	0113 246 2200	0113 246 2244
LIVERPOOL	0151 221 9500	0151 221 9544
MANCHESTER	0161 839 6969	0161 839 3434
MILTON KEYNES	01908 348 400	01908 348 348

	ECONOMY	*BUSINESS*
NEWCASTLE	0191 261 2345	0191 261 7344
NORWICH	01603 216 216	01603 216 244
NOTTINGHAM	0115 948 7700	0115 948 7744
OXFORD	01865 261 000	01865 261 044
READING	0118 334 6500	0118 334 6544
SHEFFIELD	0114 349 9200	0114 349 9191
SOLIHULL	0121 716 9000	0121 716 8999
SOUTHAMPTON	0238 251 4920	0238 251 4940
ST ALBANS	01727 807 700	01727 807 744
TUNBRIDGE WELLS	01892 347 180	01892 347 200
WINCHESTER	01962 798 500	01962 798 444
WINDSOR	01753 297 400	01753 297 444
WORCESTER	01905 349 555	01905 349 600
YORK	01904 942 900	01904 942 899

SPECIALIST TEAMS

CRUISE SPECIALISTS	020 7084 6502
CORPORATE TRAVEL	020 7368 1499
GROUP TRAVEL	020 7938 3858
TRAVEL INSURANCE	020 7408 9005
VISA & PASSPORT SERVICE	020 7368 1504
WEDDINGS & HONEYMOONS	020 7408 9008
GAP YEAR & STUDENT TRAVEL	020 7084 6530
PRIVATE TOURING	020 7084 6504

Calls may be recorded for accuracy & training

NO.1 FOR FLIGHTS ON TRUSTPILOT – HERE'S WHAT YOU'VE BEEN SAYING

> *"Lauren was so helpful in getting us a better price for our flights by moving our dates around. Saved us over £1,000! Great service."*

★★★★★

- All flights include at least 20Kg of baggage.
- 24/7/365 support from a person based in the UK, not a chat-bot. Often solving problems before you knew they existed.
- The average booking is impacted by 2 schedule changes. We address this without stress or cost to you.

More Flight Offers & Information

FLIGHT SALE NOW ON

	Economy	Business
New York	£485~	£1,499^
Phuket	£485~	£1,599
Los Angeles	£494~	£2,467#
Cape Town	£549†	£2,299†
Colombo	£549	£2,199†
Maldives	£599^	£2,099~
Vancouver	£664	£2,799#
Sydney	£790†	£3,599†
Auckland	£842†	£4,385~
Tokyo	£885	£2,268

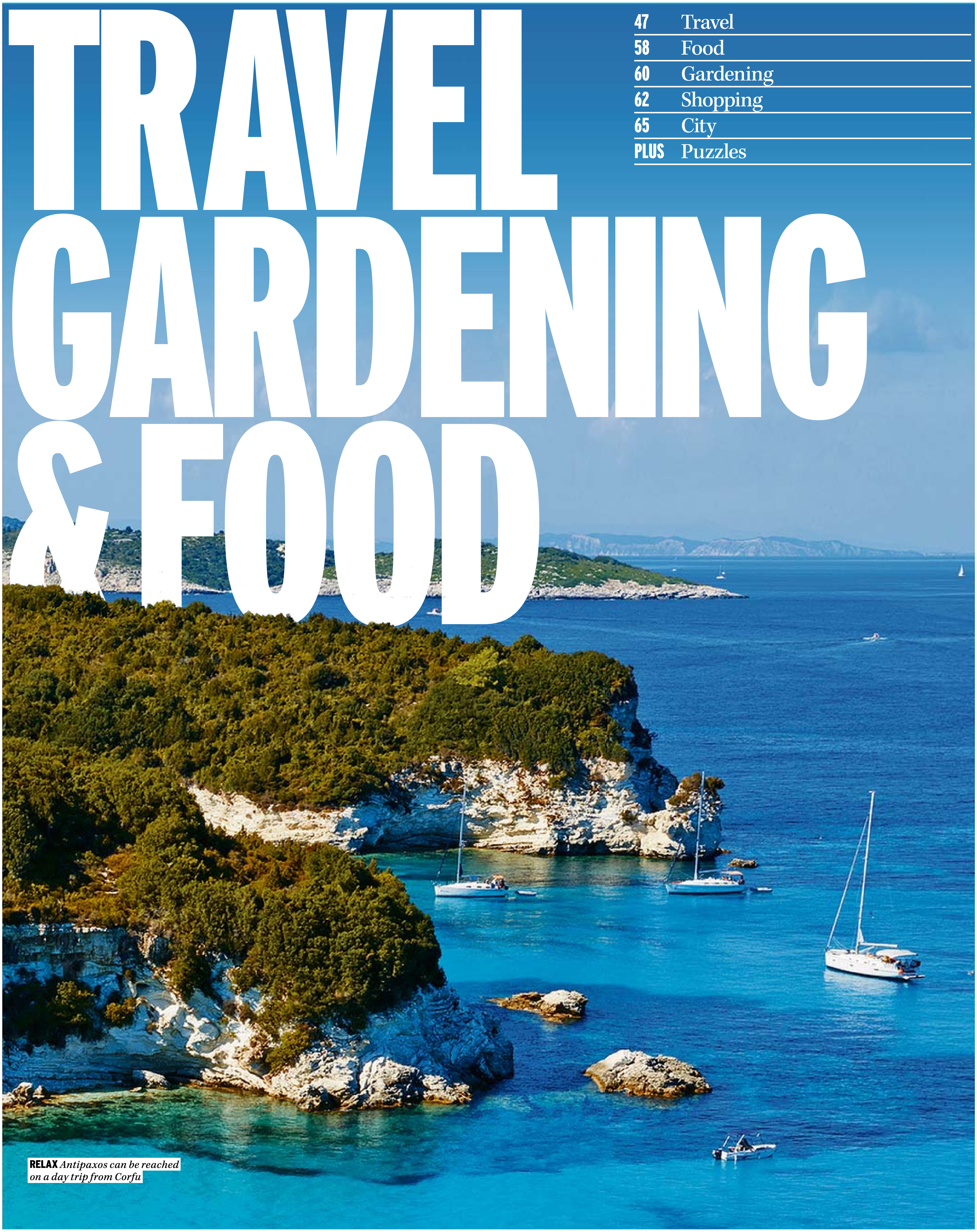
CALL FOR ANY DESTINATION OR ROUTING

NO ONE LOOKS AFTER YOU BETTER

Prices are per person based on twin share including flights from London or Manchester (call for details), are subject to availability & valid for selected departures in the next 6 weeks except ~21 Feb - 31 Mar †1 Apr - 30 Jun #1 Jul - 30 Sep ^1 Oct - 31 Dec 26 ◊Feb 27.
***Prices based on 2 adults & 2 children under 12 travelling. Hotel, cruise, tour and flight prices are dynamic, fluctuating in real time according to consumer demand and the season of travel. All information correct at time of going to print on 9 Jan 26.**

TRAVEL GARDENING & FOOD

47 Travel
58 Food
60 Gardening
62 Shopping
65 City
PLUS Puzzles



RELAX *Antipaxos can be reached on a day trip from Corfu*

PRINCESS

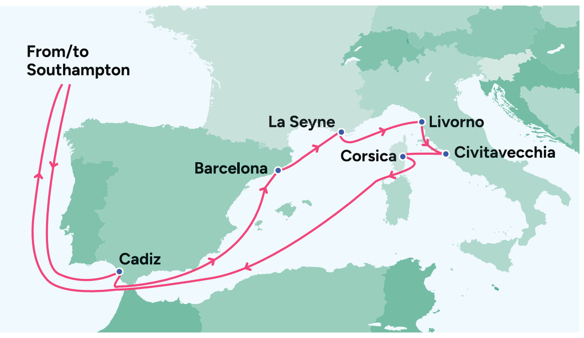
EXCLUSIVE PROMOTION ENDS 8PM 15TH JANUARY 2026

ROL CRUISE 30
TRUSTED FOR OVER 30 YEARS

THE NO-FLY ALL-INCLUSIVE UPGRADE FLASH SALE

No-Fly Mediterranean Explorer

14 NIGHTS DEPARTING 29TH MARCH, 7TH, 28TH AUGUST 2027 ON BOARD *SKY PRINCESS®*


From/to Southampton
La Seyne
Livorno
Corsica
Civitavecchia
Barcelona
Cadiz

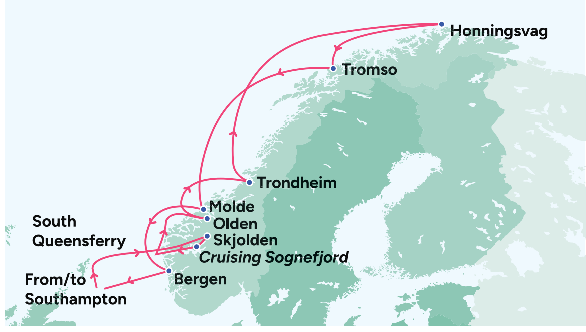
STATEROOM/SUITE<	FULL FARE (PP)	SALE FARE FROM (PP)
Interior	~~£2,048~~	**£1,979**
Ocean View	~~£2,498~~	**£2,299**
FREE UPGRADE TO A BALCONY†^		
Deluxe Balcony	~~£2,595~~	**£2,449**
Mini-Suite	~~£2,898~~	**£2,689**
Suite	~~£4,768~~	**£4,479**

Solo fares are available from **£3,189**

Itinerary, fares & availability are based on 29th March 2027 departure

No-Fly Land of the Midnight Sun

14 NIGHTS DEPARTING 12TH JUNE 2027 ON BOARD *SKY PRINCESS®*


Honningsvag
Tromso
Trondheim
Molde
Olden
Skjolden
Cruising Sognefjord
South Queensferry
From/to Southampton
Bergen

STATEROOM/SUITE<	FULL FARE (PP)	SALE FARE FROM (PP)
Interior	~~£2,298~~	**£2,239**
Ocean View	~~£3,318~~	**£2,999**
FREE UPGRADE TO A BALCONY^		
Deluxe Balcony	~~£3,407~~	**£3,239**
Mini-Suite	~~£3,598~~	**£3,379**
Suite	**– SOLD OUT –**	

Solo fares are available from **£3,629**

LOW DEPOSIT FROM ONLY £99PP

DRINKS, WI-FI & GRATUITIES INCLUDED++

FREE STATEROOM UPGRADES^

FREE ON BOARD SPEND OF UP TO $500* - FOR A LIMITED TIME ONLY

WHY BOOK WITH READER OFFERS LTD

- ☑ **UK'S NO.1 INDEPENDENT CRUISE SPECIALIST**
- ☑ **TRUSTED EXPERTISE**
- ☑ **ABTA & ATOL PROTECTED**
- ☑ **THE TOP PARTNER FOR PRINCESS CRUISES®**

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- All-inclusive premium cruising on board ***Sky Princess®*** including++:
  - **Drinks Package** – with sodas, speciality coffees and teas, cocktails, wine and beer up to $15
  - **Gratuities**
  - **Single device unlimited Wi-Fi** – stay connected to whatever you need with the best Wi-Fi at sea
  - **COMPLIMENTARY** dining options including Dine My WaySM, 24-hour buffet, 24-hour International Café, poolside grill, ice cream bar, pizzeria and afternoon tea
  - Movies Under the Stars® at the poolside theatre with **FREE** Popcorn
- **PLUS**, book a Balcony or above by 8pm 15th January 2026 to receive a **FREE** £25 John Lewis Gift Card+

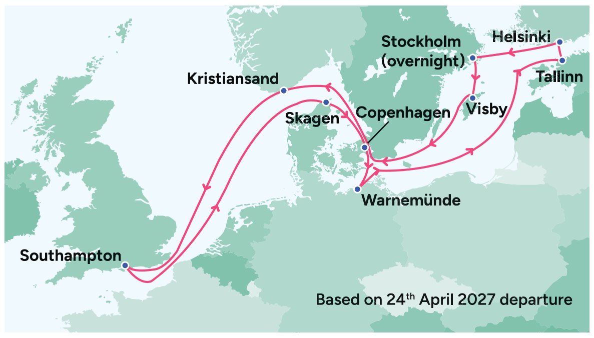
15% OFF TRAVEL INSURANCE^^ - Please call for more information

SAVE EVERY TIME YOU BOOK -
EARN EXCLUSIVE CRUISE MILES®
Worth up to **£257** off your next booking††

CRUISE MILES REWARDS YOUR LOYALTY

No-Fly Baltic Heritage

14 NIGHTS DEPARTING 24TH APRIL, 29TH MAY & 11TH SEPTEMBER 2027 ON BOARD *SKY PRINCESS®*


Stockholm (overnight)
Helsinki
Tallinn
Kristiansand
Skagen
Copenhagen
Visby
Warnemünde
Southampton

Based on 24th April 2027 departure

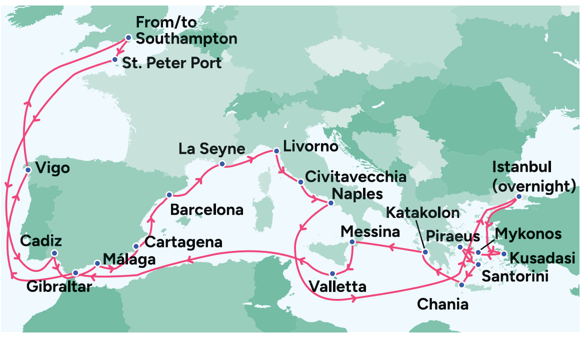
STATEROOM/SUITE<	FULL FARE (PP)	SALE FARE FROM (PP)
Inside<	~~£2,169~~	**£2,149**
Balcony	~~£2,507~~	**£2,449**
Deluxe Balcony	~~£2,619~~	**£2,559**
FREE upgrade to a Mini Suite<^		
Suite	~~£4,809~~	**£4,659**

Solo fares are available from **£3,399**

Itinerary, fares and availability are based on 24th April 2027 departure and may vary on other dates

No-Fly Mediterranean Marvel

31 NIGHTS DEPARTING 25TH SEPTEMBER 2027 ON BOARD *SKY PRINCESS®*


From/to Southampton
St. Peter Port
Vigo
La Seyne
Livorno
Civitavecchia
Naples
Istanbul (overnight)
Barcelona
Katakolon
Cadiz
Cartagena
Messina
Piraeus
Mykonos
Málaga
Kusadasi
Gibraltar
Valletta
Santorini
Chania

STATEROOM/SUITE<	FULL FARE (PP)	SALE FARE FROM (PP)
Interior	~~£4,698~~	**£4,599**
Ocean View	~~£6,395~~	**£6,089**
FREE UPGRADE TO A BALCONY^		
Deluxe Balcony	~~£6,149~~	**£6,029**
Mini-Suite	~~£6,779~~	**£6,649**
Suite (1 left!)	~~£13,313~~	**£12,899**

Solo fares are available from **£7,249**

www.rolcruise.co.uk/express

TRAVEL WITH CONFIDENCE
Agent to ATOL Holder Princess Cruises 6294
ABTA
ABTA No F9255

CALL ONE OF OUR CRUISE SPECIALISTS **FREE** ON

0808 239 4667

QUOTE OFFER REF **642616**

WE ARE OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK FROM 8:30AM – 8PM

Trustpilot ★★★★★

Platinum Trusted Service Award feefo

Pricing and availability correct at time of sign off 09/01/2026. Fares are based on two adults sharing and may increase of be withdrawn at any time. Offers apply to new bookings only. ^^15% off travel insurance is only applicable when making a new booking with ROL Cruise quoting JANSALE15, further terms and conditions apply. <On a guarantee basis. *On board spend is per stateroom/suite. †Denotes an obstructed view. ^Subject to availability. +One per booking, for UK mainland addresses only. ++Subject to the cruise line's T&Cs. Cruise Miles® T&Cs apply. Princess® T&Cs apply. E&OE.

TRAVEL

Edited by **JULIE DELAHAYE**

IDYLLIC *Set nestled in Malta's northwestern tip*

Eighties film set the greatest Malteaser

Malta's Popeye Village was an eye-opener for SAM TEESDALE *when he visited earlier in winter*

Malta boasts a rich history within the film industry and is home to numerous notable filming locations – Game of Thrones, Gladiator, and The Count of Monte Cristo have all been filmed in the small Mediterranean country. But there's one more obscure film which has preserved its legacy for good on the island – Popeye.

The 1980 film starring Robin Williams and Shelley Duvall is an underrated Disney gem, following Popeye's adventures as he arrives in the town of Sweethaven. The film, released in the UK in April 1981, received mixed reviews and has fallen into relative obscurity. It now has a 5.4 IMDb rating and a 60% score on review aggregator Rotten Tomatoes.

To create the seaside town, filmmakers actually built an entire village.

Nowadays, it serves as an open-air museum and theme park, aptly named the Popeye Village (popeyemalta.com).

I visited during low season in November, and was initially sceptical about whether I would enjoy the excursion, given that I had never seen the film and, to be completely honest, was generally unfamiliar with Popeye.

However, once I saw the stunning cliffside view of the museum looming on my approach, it was clear this was a special attraction, and why it continues to be such a draw for the millions who flock to Malta every year.

Nestled in a stunningly wild and remote cove on the northwestern tip of the island, the attraction consists of a collection of around 20 rustic and ramshackle wooden buildings, featuring interactive exhibitions, actors and plenty of free activities to keep adults and children entertained.

The construction of the film set was a mammoth undertaking. It began in June 1979, with a crew of 165 working for four months to build the village. Hundreds of logs and several thousand wooden planks were imported from the Netherlands.

While it looks amazing, the remote location of the set caused havoc for the filmmakers. Everything had to be shipped in, as the village's situation meant it was regularly battered by storms. In total, the budget reportedly ballooned to over $20million, forcing the studio to eventually halt filming and return to California with the footage they had.

STILL STANDING *Film set*

UNDERRATED GEM *1980 movie Popeye*

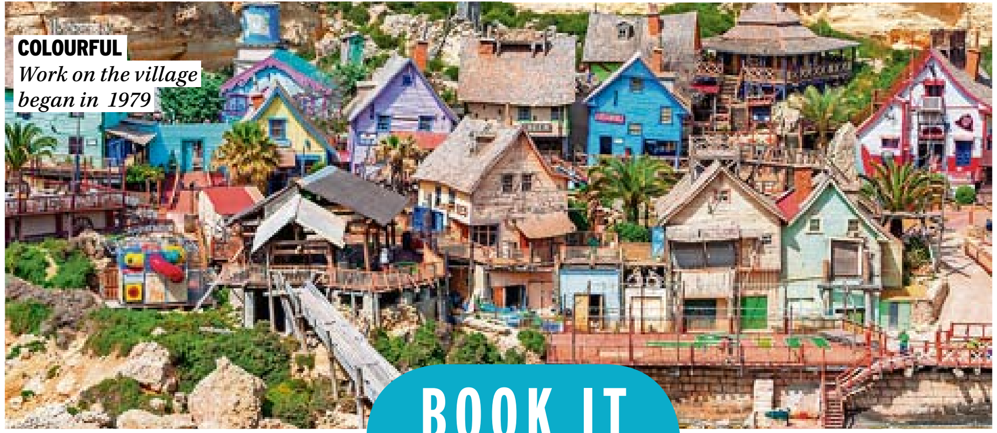
For just €15 per person (around £13), the day out came in at staggeringly good value. Visitors can roam the set for as long as they like, with guided tours, puppet shows, and even a bag of fresh popcorn all thrown in for free.

There were mini golf courses, play areas, and a cinema (screening Popeye of course), all of which was included. At a time when so many attractions can feel disappointingly overpriced and extortionate, it was refreshing to feel like you were getting plenty of bang for your buck.

Of course, nowadays, it's all about those photo opportunities, but luckily the attraction delivers. There were actors scattered throughout the museum who interacted with families and created a really fun atmosphere, and quirky moments that will definitely end up on social-media feeds. Despite it being November, I was also blessed to have the weather on my side, aside from some fairly gusty sea winds.

RAMSHACKLE *Huts made from Dutch wood*

CHARACTERS *Sam at meet and greet*



COLOURFUL *Work on the village began in 1979*

For those seeking warmer climates, head to Malta from April when temperatures start to reach 20C in the daytime – warm enough to explore, but not so hot that you're facing the peak holiday crowds.

The views alone at Popeye Village were worth the entry fee, with jaw-dropping vistas of waves rumbling in from the open Mediterranean and crashing against huge limestone cliffs.

And each house and ramshackle hut was expertly preserved and surprisingly explorable. Guests were encouraged to sit in the furniture, use props where they found them, and immerse themselves in the world that Disney created in 1980.

There were lots of bars and cafes, and I was hard-pressed to find a single queue, thanks to the joys of the low season.

Time seemed to fly by as I explored the nooks and crannies and the abundance of exhibitions, and I ended up spending well over three hours at the village, with the day out becoming the highlight of the trip.

Now all that's left for me to do is to watch the film.

BOOK IT

Sam stayed at the four-star AX ODYCY hotel in Qawra, Malta, booked through *Lastminute.com.* A six-night stay for two adults costs from £199 per person, with flights from Manchester included.

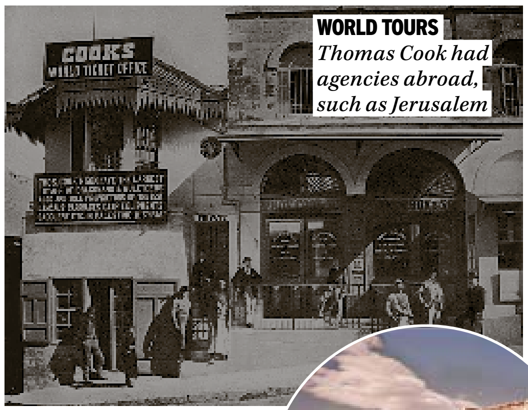
Booked and still hooked on the package holiday

EVER POPULAR *Benidorm in Costa Blanca*

By **NATALIE KING**

It's undeniable – Brits love the convenience of a package holiday. According to ABTA, 62% of people who travelled overseas last year did so as part of a package break, bundling flights and hotels with extras ranging from dining packages to coach transfers. But it has not always been this way.

The rise of package holidays coincided with the growing popularity of overseas travel, so you might assume the first package breaks were to sunny Costa Blanca or the glamorous south of France. In fact, the package holiday has far more humble beginnings. It began in 1841 when Thomas Cook chartered a train for fellow members of the temperance movement. For a shilling, passengers travelled the 11 miles from Leicester to a rally in Loughborough, with a cup of tea and a ham sandwich included.



WORLD TOURS *Thomas Cook had agencies abroad, such as Jerusalem*

IRRESISTIBLE *Brits were lured by the promise of sunshine and culture in Greece*

Encouraged by the 485 tickets sold, Cook founded Thomas Cook & Son, which went on to become synonymous with package holidays. He realised that transport providers offered discounts for block bookings, and travellers liked the simplicity of having everything organised for them.

After early trips around the Midlands and London, Cook expanded abroad. In 1855 he led groups to Belgium, Germany and France, followed by Switzerland in 1863. His most ambitious itinerary, launched in 1872, was a 222-day tour of the USA, Japan, China, India and Egypt for 200 guineas, equivalent to around £25,000 today. Around the same time, Cook pioneered circular notes, later known as travellers' cheques, making spending abroad easier.

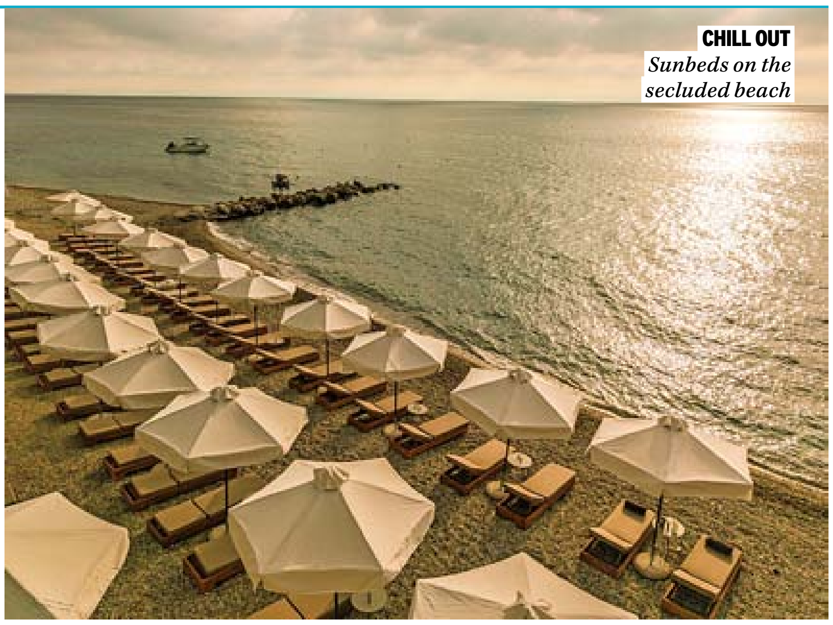
By 1888, Thomas Cook & Son had offices worldwide, including Australia and New Zealand, and by 1890 they were selling tickets to more than three million people a year. Travel was no longer just for the wealthy, as the emerging middle class embraced European trips, often including cultural visits and outdoor pursuits.

The first modern package holiday arrived in 1949 when Vladimir Raitz, a Moscow-born businessman living in London, chartered a plane to Corsica, offering two weeks of sunshine for £35, about £1,100 today. Accommodation was basic, meals were simple, but for a population still living with postwar austerity, the offer was irresistible. Horizon Holidays was born.

By 1950, one million Brits were travelling abroad annually. Destinations such as Spain began to boom, with the Costa Blanca promoted to British tourists and places like Benidorm reshaped through ambitious development plans.

At the same time, Club Med introduced the all-inclusive concept in Majorca, where meals were included and communal dining became part of the experience. The 1960s saw overseas holidays take off, driven by cheaper flights, rising wages and more paid leave. Since then, the appeal of package holidays has remained remarkably consistent. A week or two in the sun, minimal planning and maximum relaxation still define the perfect summer escape. While the world now offers endless travel options, sometimes all you really need is sunshine and a sunlounger.

CULTURE VULTURES *Corsica was the first package holiday by air*



CHILL OUT *Sunbeds on the secluded beach*

All-in for the crown jewel of the Med

The island of Corfu surpasses KATHRYN INGATE'S expectations as she finds the relaxation and pampered luxury of an all-inclusive holiday is no Greek myth

I have spent years steering clear of all-inclusive holidays. They make me feel like I'm stuck in a "bubble", removed from the destination beyond the resort walls.

But it's fair to say, I had no idea what I had been missing out on for all these years, and quite how good the wrap-around experience of an all-inclusive can feel, until I walked into the new and improved Valmar Corfu late last year, to enjoy a bubble-bursting stay. And all for a surprisingly reasonable price.

MORE CHOICE *Buffet-style restaurant*

As soon as I passed through the doors of the five-star beachfront resort in Agios Ioannis, part of the Louis Hotels Elegant Collection, I was welcomed into an oasis of relaxation. Staff were on hand to offer cooling eucalyptus towels, providing the perfect refreshment after a long day of travelling.

"Refreshing new experiences are offered every day"

My evening got even better when I discovered bottles of Greek wine and a plate laden with mouth-watering baklava in my room. The beautifully designed contemporary bedroom, complete with 100% Egyptian cotton sheets, came with a stunning view of the Ionian Sea, which I fully appreciated when I woke to see the sun rising over my private balcony the following morning.

As a brunch enthusiast, nothing could have prepared me for what awaited at the main Valle Restaurant buffet, which had the perfect variety of local flavours alongside full English breakfast favourites, an omelette freshly prepared to order by the chef, and traditional

BAY WATCH *Kathryn on her balcony*

OASIS OF CALM *The hotel has three swimming pools*

continental items. I also discovered that roasted Mediterranean vegetables are the perfect morning treat while dining al fresco in the Grecian sun.

After a hearty meal, I was ready to be pampered in the Valmar Spa, which was offering complimentary treatments to guests, something I'd always been a bit too stingy to pay extra for at hotels in the past.

The spa provides a range of treatments including facials, rituals and massage therapies and is complete with a sauna, Hammam and relaxation area.

I opted to unwind with a back and shoulders massage using Aegeo Spas' Relaxing Body Oil, enriched with locally sourced organic olive, lavender and grape seed oils. The massage therapist managed to discover and remedy a knot in my back that I didn't even know I had.

Feeling rejuvenated, I was spoilt for choice when it came to sunbathing opportunities, with the hotel boasting three different swimming pools.

I decided to venture down to the secluded beach to soak up the rays, where sunbeds are provided but not too far from Valmar's inviting all-day Beach Bar and its resplendent cocktail menu.

After indulging in an Aperol Spritz or two by the crystal blue ocean, and later working up an appetite with a walking tour around Corfu's beautiful Old Town, I was ready for what was to become the most incredible and pleasantly surprising meal of my trip.

When I took the elevator up to the hotel's rooftop Peruvian fusion restaurant Viru, nothing could have prepared me for the truly spectacular view that awaited. One side of the vista showcased Corfu's lush pine-peaked hills and cypress trees and the other the rolling waves of the sea.

Unlike many rooftop restaurants, where the quality of the food is decidedly disappointing in comparison to the spectacle surrounding them, Viru delivered with the best selection of tapas I had tasted in a long time. The tasting menu's highlights included ceviche, seafood and meltingly tender pork cheeks paired with roasted sweet potato, which was my personal favourite.

Despite having barely any room for dessert, I couldn't resist sampling a few of the sweet treats brought to the table while drinking in the vista.

While my trip was carried out in an adults only group, the hotel also caters for little ones. Children aged four to 12 are welcome at the Mini Club, can splash and play in the dedicated kids pool, and tuck in thanks to special menus at the children's buffet, designed to satisfy every picky little eater. Parents can relax on a worry-free romantic evening with the hotel's babysitter on call service and enjoy a spacious family room.

SPLASH TIME *A pool for the children*

IMMACULATE *Double twin room suite*

CRYSTAL WATERS *The Ionian Sea*

Beyond the walls of the hotel, there's plenty to do. I went on a boat trip that sailed from Corfu over the crystal blue waters of the Ionian Sea, affording us plenty of time to explore Paxos and Antipaxos, two small Greek islands.

The all-day cruise had one slightly nervy moment, when the boat ventured in towards the Blue Caves near Paxos, so close that the mast almost collided with the jagged rock formations. But, on the bright side, it gave me the unique chance to take a closer look at the jaw-dropping natural sea grottos that towered above us, before the boat thankfully travelled back out of the caves and safely towards the island.

Upon docking in Paxos in the warmth of the Grecian sun, I was in for a treat at the delectable Vasilis Restaurant. Dining on the cobbled streets, I was served fresh Mediterranean vegetables and seafood, complete with an adorable view of the local cats lounging in the midday sun. Later, at our final stop, Antipaxos, I was able to swim around the secluded island, known for its white sand beaches, turquoise waters and peaceful atmosphere.

As my trip was sadly coming to a close, I returned to Valmar and headed to the rooftop one last time to try out the opulent sunset wine tasting experience (curated to suit everyone from Whispering Angel fans, to those who are keen to sample local wines), complete with an added bonus of a vast cheese board and charcuterie, which will soon be offered to all hotel guests.

The final meal of my holiday at Valmar's seafront Gill & Olive Restaurant aptly celebrated traditional Greek flavours, with the menu featuring the catch of the day, alongside delicious vegetarian options packed with Mediterranean flair.

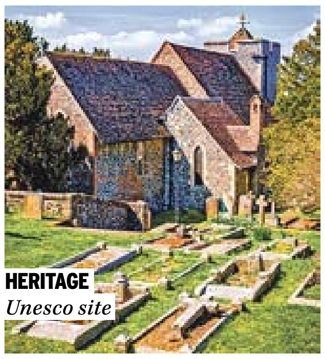
Valmar Corfu completely exceeded my expectations about what an all-inclusive hotel can provide to guests, with exceptional staff offering a refreshingly new experience every day and an exploration of local culture, meaning there's absolutely no chance of boredom.

BOOK IT

Jet2 offers seven nights at the 5* Valmar Corfu, from £783 per person. Price based on two adults sharing a Superior Room with Balcony on an all-inclusive basis and includes return flights with Jet2 from London Stansted to Corfu and transfers. Price based on May 1, 2026 departure. To book go to jet2holidays.com

MORE INFO

Visit valmarcorfu.com for more hotel information



HERITAGE *Unesco site*

VISIT CANTERBURY TO SEE THE OLDEST ENGLISH BUILDING

By **AMY JONES**

England is home to some truly architecturally fascinating buildings. But there's one that is the oldest surviving structure in the country, and it's certainly worth a visit.

In the heart of Canterbury lies the ancient Church of St Martin, built on Roman foundations, with Saxon elements in its windows and structure, as well as Norman and Medieval additions.

It's the oldest church in Britain, having been constructed before 597 AD, and according to Historic England's blog, Heritage Calling, it is the oldest surviving building in England. It also makes up a third of a Unesco World Heritage Site, alongside Canterbury Cathedral and St Augustine's Abbey.

The oldest part of the church was built during the Roman occupation, but it's unknown what the first part of the structure was designed for, or whether it was used as a mausoleum or church. It was later expanded with the nave becoming the first Anglo-Saxon structure made of mortared brick and stone rather than wood.

CHURCH NAVE *Exposed beams*

Visitors have shared how much they love the site's exposed wooden beams, along with intricate stained-glass windows, a lengthy nave and wooden pews. One wrote on Tripadvisor: "Given to the sixth-century Frankish princes, this beautiful building has a wonderful history. Those buried in the grounds of St Martin's include 19th-century evangelist William Cadman, artist Thomas Sidney Cooper, and Mary Tourtel, the creator of Rupert Bear."

SUNSHINE STREET
The old city of Porto is a UNESCO World Heritage site

Make it your first Porto call

With its food and wine elixirs and towering historical attractions, JULIE DELAHAYE raises a glass to Portugal's vibrant, second-largest city

As a travel editor, I've been lucky enough to tick off more than 50 cities, but this year there's one that's instantly become a firm favourite after just one visit – and that's Porto.

I headed to Portugal over the summer for a friend's wedding and having never been before I decided to extend the trip. Porto had been popping up on my social media feeds and I was curious to see what all the fuss was about. I can confirm it lived up to the hype.

A city that boasts history, excellent food and wine, friendly locals and attractions from a Hogwarts-worthy bookshop to the "world's most beautiful McDonald's" was always going to win me over.

NOVEL IDEA
Inside the Livraria Lello

And it is so walkable. Everything can be reached within half an hour on foot. But a word of caution: it's very hilly so definitely wear comfortable trainers. There are public transport options but most of the time it was so much fun to wander around, especially as throughout the city you'll find quirky architecture, beautiful buildings covered in colourful tiles and independent shops tucked away in little side streets.

If you fancy a sit down, then take a ride on one of the vintage trams – it's a unique way to take in some of the sights.

Speaking of which, there was plenty to see. I stayed for four days, which was the right amount to explore without feeling rushed.

One of the first things on the itinerary was a stroll across the Luis I Bridge. It's a double-deck bridge, so when you walk along the top "deck" you can not only see the cars and traffic below, but you can also take in views of the Duoro river and the valley. It's a very novel and scenic stroll.

Make sure to stick to the narrow pavements as the bridge is still being used for the city's trams which pass through. I was taken aback by the tourists who'd casually step out to get a photo, seemingly not caring about the tram that was getting dangerously close.

Once you've ticked off the bridge, there are plenty of beautiful places to explore in Porto. For unrivalled views of the city, climb to the top of the Clérigos tower. You'll need to buy a ticket for a specific time slot, but we were able to return within half an hour of getting to the ticket desk, in the middle of July.

The tower itself is pretty impressive, but the views from the top were breathtaking; there's just something about looking out at the river, rooftops and valley views all from one vantage point.

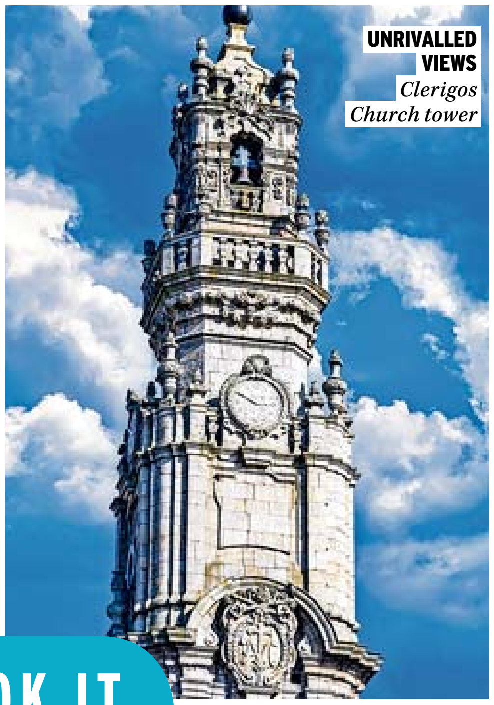
Next was a trip to the Porto-São Bento train station, famed for its high ceilings and walls covered in ornate mosaic tiles and intricate architecture. I reckon you could easily miss your train just staring at all of the eye-catching features.

If you're after more beauty, then the Livraria Lello bookshop is a must visit. It's probably appeared on your social media feeds already, given its huge bookshelves, intricate architecture, stained glass ceilings and an iconic red spiral staircase. Honestly, you feel like you've stepped into Hogwarts.

You have to pay €10 in advance and book a specific time slot, but if you buy some books, the €10 fee gets deducted from your total purchase. I opted for a 9.30am slot in the hope that the crowds wouldn't be too bad. It was busy but I still got in within 15 minutes after my arrival time at the queue. Instantly, I could see what all the fuss is about – and I even ended up taking some books home.

ATTENTION SPAN
The Luis I Bridge

MOSAIC MARVELS
One of the many tiled buildings in Porto



UNRIVALLED VIEWS
Clerigos Church tower

A vintage tram is a unique way to see sights

Amidst all of the exploring and shopping, I needed to find something to eat. At the Time Out Market I was able to try one of Porto's traditional Francesinha dishes (think a giant ham and cheese toastie that's actually packed with steak, ham and sausage, served with fries). However, there was one restaurant I needed to try; the world's most beautiful McDonald's.

Look, I was promised chandeliers and amazing Art Deco interiors, so I wanted to see if it was worth a trip. Spoiler; it was. It's very pretty to look at – McDonald's kept most of the original features when the original cafe first opened its doors in the 1990s. It looks quite big when you walk in, but it's actually because the walls are covered in huge mirrors, so there's not loads of seating. Still, it was worth popping in just to tick it off the list.

Overall, between the sights, food and quirky attractions, Porto offered everything I wanted from a fun city break – and it's definitely one I want to return to, if only to see if I can get my hands on another Francesinha...

BOOK IT

EasyJet offers direct flights to Porto from a number of UK airports, with fares from £21.99 each way. *easyjet.com* We stayed at the NH Collection Porto Batalha with rooms from £87 a night, based on two adults sharing. *nh-hotels.com*

MORE INFO

You can find out more on *visitporto.travel/en-GB*

Travel Insurance for Over 50s

All ages. All conditions. All destinations.

NEW YEAR SALE
USE CODE: NY26
UP TO
20% OFF*
+ A CHANCE TO
WIN £3,500*

- ✓ Voted UK's No.1 for Customer Care[1]
- ✓ 24/7 English-speaking emergency helpline
- ✓ Trusted by millions for 25 years

Not all Travel Insurance is the same

MAY 2025 Which? Best Buy TRAVEL INSURANCE
JUNE 2024 Which? Best Buy TRAVEL INSURANCE
FEBRUARY 2024 Which? Best Buy TRAVEL INSURANCE

Trustpilot
Rated Excellent
★★★★★

defaqto
★★★★★
Travel Insurance 2018-2025
EXPERT RATED

Call our UK Team 7 days a week FREE
0800 249 4661
AllClearTravel.co.uk

AllClear™ ✓

AllClear Gold Plus and Platinum achieved Which? Best Buy. AllClear Gold Plus has been 5 Star rated by Defaqto. [1] UK Broker Awards, Customer Service Award 2025. * Discount applies to base premiums only: 5% off £0–£49, 10% off £50–£249, and 20% off £250+. Premium generated by medical condition cover and optional extras are excluded. Not valid with other offers. Ends 23:59, 29 Jan 2026. Quotes from 19 Dec 2025–29 Jan 2026 entered into the prize draw. For more information please refer to T&Cs at AllClearTravel.co.uk.

EXCLUSIVE TO

Book your holiday before 12 January with

NO DEPOSIT

easyJet holidays

Jet2holidays

TUI

VISTA

OCEAN Florida

Newmarket HOLIDAYS

AMBASSADOR CRUISE LINE

Disney CRUISE LINE

PRINCESS

ROYAL CARIBBEAN

HAYS TRAVEL

On Safari in South Africa

fr. £102pp/month

7 nights | June 2026 - December 2028 (Price based on September 2028)
All Inclusive at Mabula Lodge
Flying from selected UK airports

NO DEPOSIT | 31 payments of £102pp | Total cost £3,162pp

Tenerife

fr. £119pp/month

7 nights | July 2026
4 Half Board - Allegro Isora*
Flying from selected UK airports

NO DEPOSIT
5 payments of £119pp
Total cost £595pp

Algarve

fr. £48pp/month

7 nights | September 2026
3 Self Catering - Mirachoro Portimao*
Flying from selected UK airports

NO DEPOSIT
7 payments of £48pp
Total cost £336pp

Greece and Adriatic

fr. £238pp/month

7 night cruise | September 2026
Full board on Sun Princess
Flying from selected UK airports

NO DEPOSIT
6 payments of £238pp
Total cost £1,428pp

Norway's Coast

fr. £64pp/month

10 night cruise | June 2027
Full board on Ambassador Ambition
Sailing from Liverpool

NO DEPOSIT
17 payments of £64pp
Total cost £1,082pp

Mexico

fr. £105pp/month

14 nights | September 2027
5 All Inclusive - Ocean Riviera Paradise*
Flying from selected UK airports

NO DEPOSIT
19 payments of £105pp
Total cost £1,995pp

New York

fr. £63pp/month

3 nights | December 2027
3 Room only - Candlewood Suites Times Square*
Flying from selected UK airports

NO DEPOSIT
21 payments of £63pp
Total cost £1,323pp

Spain Mini Cruise

Family of 3 fr. £574/month

7 night cruise | August 2026
4nts Full board on Disney Dream
Sailing from Southampton

NO DEPOSIT
6 payments of £574 per family
Total cost £3,444

Orlando

Family of 4 fr. £328/month

7 nights | April 2027
3 Room only - Universal Endless Summer Dockside Inn & Suites*
Flying from selected UK airports

NO DEPOSIT
14 payments of £328 per family
Total cost £4,592

Spain and Portugal

Family of 3 fr. £145/month

7 night cruise | July 2027
Full board on Mariner of the seas
Sailing from Southampton

NO DEPOSIT
17 payments of £145 per family
Total cost £2,465

Hays Travel

JANUARY 2026 Which? Recommended Provider HIGH STREET TRAVEL AGENTS

DECEMBER 2025 Which? Recommended Provider FAMILY HOLIDAYS

WINNER BRITISH TRAVEL AWARDS 2025 BEST NATIONAL TRAVEL RETAILER

WINNER BRITISH TRAVEL AWARDS 2025 BEST TRAVEL AGENCY FOR CRUISE HOLIDAYS

WINNER BRITISH TRAVEL AWARDS 2025 BEST RETAILER FOR FOREX/TRAVEL MONEY

Trustpilot ★★★★★

ABTA

ATOL PROTECTED

Terms and conditions apply. No deposit available with selected operators on new bookings made from 23 December 2025 to 12 January 2026 for holidays departing between 01 June 2026 and 31 October 2027. Only available on direct debit bookings. Customer must be 18 years old or over and have a valid email address and bank account to qualify for a direct debit with Hays Travel. Prices correct at time of print 10.01.2026.

Find your local branch

Call Centre open 7 days
9am-10pm on 0800 098 3573

haystravel.co.uk

P&O CRUISES

NEW
All-inclusive packages now available

with Drinks, WiFi & Speciality Dining

Book now with only a 10% Deposit◊

14 nights

Mediterranean - Spain and France

Early Saver Inside Cabin fr.

£1,805PP

21 June 2026
All-inclusive on P&O Cruises Arvia
Sailing from Southampton

Itinerary highlights:
Malaga, Toulon (La Seyne-Sur-Mer), Barcelona and more

7 nights

Norwegian Fjords

Early Saver Inside Cabin fr.

£1,089PP

26 June 2026
All-inclusive on P&O Cruises Britannia
Sailing from Southampton

Itinerary highlights:
Stavenger, Olden, Alesund and more

35 nights

Caribbean Winter Warmth

Early Saver Inside Cabin fr.

£4,169PP

4 January 2027
All-inclusive on P&O Cruises Iona
Sailing from Southampton

Itinerary highlights:
Tenerife, St Kitts & Nevis, Barbados (Overnight), St Lucia, Antigua and more

7 nights

Northern Europe and Scandinavia

Early Saver Inside Cabin fr.

£892PP

4 December 2027
All-inclusive on P&O Cruises Ventura
Sailing from Southampton

Itinerary highlights:
Copenhagen (Overnight), Oslo and Skagen

Prices include All-inclusive Classic package worth £49pp per day*

Hays Travel

Visit your local Hays Travel branch
Call **0800 098 3536**
haystravel.co.uk | Find us on Facebook

WINNER BRITISH TRAVEL AWARDS 2025 BEST TRAVEL AGENCY FOR CRUISE HOLIDAYS
WINNER BRITISH TRAVEL AWARDS 2025 BEST NATIONAL TRAVEL RETAILER
Trustpilot ★★★★★

BOOK WITH CONFIDENCE WITH THE UK'S LARGEST INDEPENDENT TRAVEL AGENT

ABTA ATOL PROTECTED

Terms and Conditions apply: -†Early Saver price of per person is based on two adults sharing the lowest grade cabin. Prices are subject to availability and may go up or down. Early Saver bookings are made at the relevant cabin grade and a cabin number is allocated by P&O Cruises prior to departure. Dining preferences are not guaranteed. Shuttle buses in ports are an additional cost. Early Saver prices apply to new bookings only. These terms and conditions vary, where relevant, the applicable booking conditions which are otherwise unchanged. *Price shown including package price of £49 per person per day is based on the 'All-inclusive Classic' all-inclusive package on a cruise of 5 nights or more. 32% discount shown is based on the 'All-inclusive Classic' package on a cruise of 5-9 nights compared to the on-board price of purchasing the Classic drinks package, Essential Wi-Fi and a dining credit of £20 per person. All-inclusive packages are offered as an optional add-on when making a new booking on applicable holidays of 5 nights or more, departing after 1 March 2026. Package price per day varies by cruise duration and package type. All-inclusive packages must be purchased for all eligible guests sharing a cabin and are only available to guests aged 18 years or older at the time of embarkation. Guests aged 17 and under travelling with one adult only will be charged at the adult all-inclusive package price, however they will receive a Refresh drinks package, Wi-Fi and dining credit. All-inclusive packages are subject to availability at the time of booking. Limited numbers apply. For full terms and conditions please see hayscruise.co.uk. E&OE

Over 50s Travel Insurance with no upper age limits

- ✓ 24/7 English speaking emergency helpline
- ✓ Unlimited medical cover available[1]
- ✓ Covered 27 million+ travellers
- ✓ Trusted for 25 years

NEW YEAR SALE
UP TO
20% OFF*

+ 3 CHANCES TO WIN
£1,000* PRIZES
USE CODE: NEW26

MAY 2025 Which? Best Buy TRAVEL INSURANCE
JUNE 2024 hich? est Buy TRAVEL INSURANCE
FEBRUARY 2024 hich? est Buy TRAVEL INSURANCE

Trustpilot Rated Excellent ★★★★★

defaqto ★★★★★ Travel Insurance 2011–2025 EXPERT RATED

INSUREANDGO
Go without the doubt

Call our UK Call Centre FREE
0800 640 4816
InsureandGo.com

^InsureandGo Gold and Black achieved Which? Best buy. InsureandGo Gold and Black has been 5 Star rated by Defaqto. [1] Unlimited emergency medical expenses available on Black policies. *Discount applies to base premiums only: 5% off £0–£49, 10% off £50–£249, and 20% off £250+. Premium generated by medical condition cover and optional extras are excluded. Not valid with other offers. Ends 23:59, 29 Jan 2026. Quotes from 19 Dec 2025–29 Jan 2026 entered into the prize draw. See website T&Cs for more details.

Travel Insurance

Cover for medical conditions | no age limits!

you're goodtogo

Trustpilot ★★★★★ Excellent

defaqto ★★★★★ 2025 EXPERT RATED

20% OFF* BASE PREMIUM
NEW YEAR SALE
Quote code **EX20**

Plus, WIN £1,000 in holiday vochers
Automatic entry when you buy a policy in January**

Save money on your travel insurance today!

Call us FREE for an instant quote
0800 038 5232

- ☑ 24/7 medical emergency assistance
- ☑ Experts in cover for medical conditions

goodtogoinsurance.com

Authorised & Regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority No. 471641. Terms & Conditions apply. 5-star Defaqto rating applies to Platinum policies and Premium Cruise single trip policies only. *Discount applies to base premium only. **Terms and conditions apply, please visit www.goodtogoinsurance.com/holiday-prize-draw-terms-and-conditions-january-2026 for details. Discount valid until 31st March 2026.

Total Travel Protection

20% OFF* BASE PREMIUM
Quote code: SX20

Travel Insurance

Medical conditions? No problem!

We do medical screening differently. You could get a better price!

- Annual & single trip
- Cover for all types of conditions

Call free:
0808 175 4459
totaltravelprotection.com

Authorised & Regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority No.471641. Terms & Conditions apply. *Discount applies to base premium only. Discount valid until 31st March 2026.

Trustpilot ★★★★★ Excellent

20% off‡ your travel insurance

With Avanti Travel Insurance, you'll have protection for both you and your holiday. Before you go away as well as when you're on your trip. That's good to know, especially if you're travelling with pre-existing health conditions.

That's Travel Reassurance!

- ✓ Pre-existing health condition cover
- ✓ Unlimited emergency medical expenses*
- ✓ Cancellation cover up to £7,500*
- ✓ 24/7 medical emergency support
- ✓ No upper age limit on cover

SAVE 20%‡

Use Code: **20DE**

Ends 3/3/2026

0333 049 7142

avanti.co.uk

Trustpilot ★★★★★ Over 115,000 reviews

defaqto ★★★★★ Travel Insurance 2014–2025 EXPERT RATED Deluxe policies

avanti Travel Insurance

‡Excludes costs to cover medical conditions and add-ons. New policies only. T&Cs apply. *On Deluxe policies.

Act your age

Get the UK's favourite travel insurance

- ✓ Pre-existing medical conditions covered
- ✓ All ages covered
- ✓ Double the 5-star Trustpilot reviews than any other provider

Dream Big. Staysure.

20% off‡ with code DE20

Visit staysure.co.uk or call

0333 049 7131

Nine Time Winner BRITISH TRAVEL AWARDS 2025 BEST COMPANY FOR TRAVEL INSURANCE

Staysure™ Travel Insurance

‡Discount excludes costs to cover medical conditions and add-ons, new policies only. Offer ends 3/3/2026. Terms, conditions, and exclusions apply. BTA winners 2016–2025

£46 to £221? That's wild.

Yes, travel insurance quotes can vary wildly. Compare prices in a flash and stop paying too much for yours.

Price is based on an annual policy for a 65-year-old, travelling within Europe with diabetes.

Prices taken on 16/12/2025 from the brands on the PayingTooMuch panel, cover levels vary.

payingtoomuch

payingtoomuch.com
0333 014 2077

Trustpilot ★★★★★
Rated Excellent
95,000 reviews

MuickSandy.

YOUR CHAIR & SCOOTER SPECIALISTS

The highest leg lift in the UK

HALF PRICE SALE*

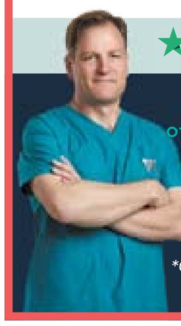
Plus up to **£500 trade-in** for your chair or scooter

Proudly Made in Britain

The UK's lightest foldable scooter!

mucksandy.co.uk

Trustpilot ★★★★★ Rated "Excellent" by over 3,000 happy customers



*In partnership with world-renowned vascular surgeon **Professor Stephen Black***

Freephone 0800 043 2323
to order your FREE brochure today! Quote code: **EXPRESS**

Get a 2nd riser recliner or scooter half price when ordered together - offer ends 31st March 2026.

The **normal size** Walk-in Bath you can lie down or **shower in!**

- 100% watertight door - available either side of the bath
- Low threshold
- Optional powered seat
- Wide, roomy interior
- Thermostatic taps

FITTED IN A DAY*

Easy to use handset!

JANUARY SALE UP TO 20% OFF**

For a brochure call FREEPHONE
0800 316 9798
Ask for Extension 65986 or visit
www.nationwide-mobility.co.uk

Nationwide Mobility

*Based on a straightforward fitting.
**Not in conjunction with any other offer.
Nationwide Mobility is a trading name of Aquability UK Ltd

Rise to the occasion

Which? Recommended Provider

- ✓ Wide range of stairlifts for all staircase types
- ✓ Buy or rent a stairlift to suit your needs and budget
- ✓ 14-day money-back guarantee & 2-year warranty on new models
- ✓ 24/7 support from local engineers and our UK call centre

MADE IN BRITAIN

Contact us today
0800 715 195
stannah.com

Stannah

THE VOICE OF A SURVIVOR

Neglected and betrayed. Groomed and abused. Hear Me is a call to arms for unheard victims everywhere.

LIZ HURDUCK
HEAR ME

ON SALE NOW IN ALL GOOD BOOKSHOPS AND AMAZON.

WOMEN'S FOOTBALL NEWS
HOLDT RIGHT AT HOME!
SIX FREE BARCLAYS WSL OFFICIAL STICKERS

YOUR ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO WOMEN'S FOOTBALL

ONLY £3.50

ORDER YOUR COPY TODAY

AT REACHSHOPS.CO.UK/WOMENSFOOTBALL

AVAILABLE TO PURCHASE IN PARTICIPATING SUPERMARKETS, MOST STREET RETAILERS AND INDEPENDENT NEWSAGENTS. ONLINE PURCHASE PRICE EXCLUDES P&P. SEE WEBSITE FOR DETAILS.

SCAN HERE

FOOD FEED YOUR SOUL

Brought to you by Good Food's Food Director, **CASSIE BEST**

Kickstarting your healthy new year meal routine

If you're trying to stick to a healthy eating plan, I've got just the thing. Start the day with a smoothie bowl, packed with fruits, seeds and nuts. Then beat the lunchtime dip with a budget-friendly jacket potato filled with protein-packed chickpea curry. For a comforting dinner, try this healthy take on lasagne. And don't forget the snacks...

VEGAN CHICKPEA CURRY JACKET POTATOES

PREP: 15 MINS • COOK: 45 MINS • SERVES 4 • EASY

Get some protein into a vegan diet with this tasty chickpea curry jacket. It's an easy midweek meal, or filling lunch that packs a lot of flavour

- **4 sweet potatoes**
- **1tbsp coconut oil**
- **1 ½ tsp cumin seeds**
- **1 large onion, diced**
- **2 garlic cloves, crushed**
- **Thumb-sized piece of ginger, finely grated**
- **1 green chilli, finely chopped**
- **1tsp garam masala**
- **1tsp ground coriander**
- **½ tsp turmeric**
- **2tbsp tikka masala paste**
- **2 x 400g can chopped tomatoes**
- **2 x 400g can chickpeas, drained**
- **Lemon wedges and coriander leaves, to serve**

1 Heat the oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6 or if using an air fryer heat to 200C. Prick the sweet potatoes all over with a fork, then put on a baking tray and roast in the oven for 45 mins or in air fryer basket for 50 mins or until tender when pierced with a knife.

2 Meanwhile, melt the coconut oil in a large saucepan over a medium heat. Add the cumin seeds and fry for 1 min until fragrant, then add the onion and fry for 7-10 mins until softened.

3 Put the garlic, ginger and green chilli into the pan, and cook for 2-3 mins. Add the spices and tikka masala paste and cook for a further 2 mins until fragrant, then tip in the tomatoes. Bring to a simmer, then tip in the chickpeas and cook for a further 20 mins until thickened. Season.

4 Put the potatoes on four plates and cut open lengthways. Spoon over the chickpea curry and squeeze over the lemon wedges. Season, then scatter with coriander before serving.

SMOOTHIE BOWL

PREP: 5 MINS • NO COOK • SERVES 1 GENEROUSLY • EASY

Make a colourful berry smoothie bowl for breakfast. You could swap in mango, pineapple and kiwi and substitute coconut water for the oat milk to create a tropical version

- **200g frozen mixed berries**
- **1 ripe banana**
- **75ml oat milk**
- **1tsp maple syrup**
- **½ tbsp vanilla protein powder, vegan version if needed**

To top

- **Sliced kiwis, bananas and fresh berries**
- **25g granola**
- **1tbsp mixed nuts and seeds**
- **1tbsp almond butter**

1 Put the berries, banana, oat milk, maple syrup and protein powder in a powerful blender and blend until smooth. Add a splash more milk if needed, but remember it needs to be quite thick.

2 Spoon the smoothie into a bowl and dot over the fresh fruit, granola and mixed nuts and seeds. Drizzle over the almond butter to serve.

HEALTHY LASAGNE

PREP: 15 MINS • COOK: 1 HR AND 15 MINS • SERVES 4 • EASY

Enjoy our lighter version of the family classic. It has bags of flavour, but comes in at under 500 calories a portion, as well as packing in four of your five-a-day

- **1tbsp olive oil**
- **1 large onion (250g), finely chopped**
- **320g carrots, finely chopped**
- **2 celery sticks (140g), finely chopped**
- **2 bay leaves**
- **500g 5% beef mince**
- **3 large garlic cloves, finely grated**
- **400g can chopped tomatoes**
- **2tbsp tomato puree**
- **1½ tsp vegetable bouillon powder**
- **400ml semi-skimmed milk**
- **30g wholemeal flour**
- **Generous pinch of nutmeg**
- **6 sheets wholemeal lasagne**
- **25g finely grated parmesan**

1 Heat the oven to 180C/160C fan/gas 4. Heat the oil in a large frying pan over a medium heat and fry the onion, carrots, celery and one of the bay leaves for 8-10 mins until the veg softens and is starting to turn golden. Add the mince and garlic, and stir-fry until the beef browns, for about 5 mins. Tip in the tomatoes and a can of water, the tomato puree and bouillon, boil then cover and simmer for 20 mins, removing the lid after 10 mins to reduce the mixture slightly.

2 Meanwhile, pour the milk into a medium pan with the flour and whisk over a low heat until the mixture is lump-free. Add the second bay leaf and a good pinch of nutmeg, and continue to cook, whisking, for 8-10 mins until thick.

3 Remove the bay leaves from the mince and white sauce, and discard. Spoon a third of the mince into the base of a 19 x 24cm baking dish and top with two lasagne sheets. Spoon over half of the remaining mince, then top with two more lasagne sheets, the rest of the mince and the remaining lasagne sheets. Spoon over the white sauce and sprinkle with the cheese. Bake for 40 mins until bubbling and golden.

SEE MORE

For more healthy food recipes, check out @GoodHealthByGoodFood on Instagram and TikTok. Brought to you by Good Food's team of experts, Good Health offers straight-talking, evidence-based content across food, nutrition, wellbeing, fitness, and everyday health advice that actually works, with content from Melissa Hemsley, Mr Gut Health, Dr Bowl and Sophie the nutritionist. Visit goodfood.com/health for more healthy recipes and advice.

HEALTHY COOKIES

PREP: 10 MINS • COOK: 20 MINS • MAKES 12 COOKIES • EASY

Grab a few of these energy-boosting healthy cookies for a quick breakfast, or offer as snacks to bridge the hunger gap before dinner. Enjoy with yogurt and fruit

- **2 ripe bananas, mashed**
- **150g porridge oats**
- **2tbsp ground almonds**
- **½ tsp cinnamon**
- **100g raspberries (fresh or frozen)**

1 Preheat the oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 4 and line two baking trays with baking parchment. If you're using an air fryer, skip preheating at this stage.

2 In a bowl, mix the banana, oats, almonds, cinnamon, and a pinch of salt to create a sticky dough. Gently stir through the raspberries, being careful not to break them up. Scoop up tablespoons of the mixture and roll them into balls. For the oven, place them on the prepared baking trays and flatten them with your hand. If you are using an air fryer, you can proceed to the next step.

3 If you're using the oven, bake the cookies for 15 mins until they feel firm around the edges and are golden brown. If you're using the air fryer, preheat it to 180C for 4 mins. Place the cookies in a single layer in the air fryer basket. You might need to do this in two batches. Air fry them for 8-10 mins until they start to feel firm around the edges and are golden brown.

4 Once the cookies are done, leave them to cool. They can be stored in an airtight container for up to three days.

GROW THE PLOT THICKENS

With **DAVID DOMONEY** *daviddomoney.com*
YouTube.com/DavidDomoney

Perfect plants to grow inside

How to select and look after your indoor greenery

FOR LOW LIGHT
Aspidistra elatior

This month might be a bit grim outside, but it's a great time to enjoy indoor greenery. Even in lower light, the right houseplants can bring colour, texture, and life to shaded corners. Success comes down to choosing plants that cope with shade, then watering less and cleaning leaves more throughout winter.

Understanding light in winter low light is not the same as no light. If you can read comfortably where they are in the daytime, many shade-tolerant houseplants will manage well. If the room stays gloomy, growth slows, so place plants nearer a window, rotate them, or use a small grow light. Greener leaves usually cope better than heavily variegated ones. Some homes are naturally dimmer year-round, such as north-facing rooms or those shaded by taller buildings.

ASPIDISTRA ELATIOR (CAST-IRON PLANT)

A classic for low light, with strong glossy leaves and a tidy shape. Let compost dry slightly between waterings, and wipe dust from leaves so they keep their shine. For a lighter look, Aspidistra elatior 'Milky Way' adds subtle speckling while still coping well in shade.

DRACAENA FRAGRANS (CORN PLANT)

Dracaena gives height without fuss, making it useful for corners that benefit from structure. Deep green forms cope well with lower light and give a neat outline in winter. Water them lightly, avoid cold draughts, and don't let them sit in water. They're also great for filling the gap left behind by your Christmas tree.

See more in the Step by Step episode from Blue Diamond's Bridgemere Show Gardens on my YouTube channel @daviddomoney.

FICUS ELASTICA (RUBBER PLANT)

Bold, architectural foliage that gives instant presence, especially in plain corners. Ficus elastica 'Robusta' is a reliable option for modest light, holding rich green leaves without needing a bright window. Water only when the top layer of compost dries, and rotate the pot for even growth. Clean the leaves regularly, as dust shows quickly on that glossy surface and reduces light capture. Handle with care, as the sap can irritate skin.

MONSTERA DELICIOSA (SWISS CHEESE PLANT)

A statement plant with a tropical feel, ideal when you want something generous and leafy. It tolerates shade, although growth will be slower and leaves may develop fewer splits. Put it in the brightest part of the room away from direct sun, and turn it now and then so it does not lean.

GOEPPERTIA MAKOYANA (SYN. CALATHEA MAKOYANA OR PEACOCK PLANT)

Perfect for a pattern in bright shade, with beautifully marked leaves that add detail without needing strong sun. Keep it away from draughts and radiators – sudden temperature swings cause stress. Give them water at room temperature and aim for lightly moist compost. If leaf edges become crispy, humidity is usually too low, so group plants together, mist lightly, or stand the pot on a pebble tray.

Extra-Warm for a Highland Winter

Warm Fleece-Lined Shirts

Only £27.45 each

SAVE £35 (when you buy 2)

Bark
Bramble
Beech
Birch
Blackthorn
Boxwood
Hoggs of Fife 1888

Scotland's Warmest Shirt? Well, thousands of our satisfied customers would certainly agree. This fleece-lined shirt will keep you warm and cosy whether you're working outdoors or hunkering down indoors. The fibres of the soft micro-fleece lining trap warm air, keeping you warm on the coldest day. Equally comfortable tucked-in or worn as a rugged overshirt. With one button-down chest pocket, double button cuffs and extended shirt tail. Trusted by outdoor professionals and country enthusiasts for over 137 years. **Order Today.**

Sizes: S(35-37) M(38-40) L(41-43) XL(44-46) 2XL(47-49) 3XL(50-52) 4XL(53-55)
Colours: Bark, Bramble, Beech, Birch, Blackthorn, Boxwood
Fleece-Lined Shirts Normal Price £44.95
Special Price £29.95 (SAVE £15)
2 Shirts for £54.90 (SAVE £35)
Plus FREE p&p (worth £4.95)

Fife Country ~ est 1888 ~

www.fifecountry.co.uk Tel: 0345 607 6632
Please Quote 26ADE2 Mon-Fri 9-6pm, Sat 9-5pm, Sun 11-4pm

Money Back Guarantee

Please quote code 26ADE2 on our website, by 'phone or return coupon to: FREEPOST RTCK-ZKYJ-GGRB, Fife Country, Cupar, Fife KY15 4RB

☐ I enclose a cheque made payable to Fife Country
☐ Please charge £____________ from my credit/debit card

Card Type: Visa Debit ☐ Visa Credit ☐ Mastercard ☐

Card No ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐ Valid From ☐☐☐☐ Expiry Date ☐☐☐☐ Security No ☐☐☐

PLEASE SEND:	CODE	COLOUR	SIZE	QTY	TOTAL
Fleece-Lined Shirt	2269				
Fleece-Lined Shirt	2269				
Fleece-Lined Shirt	2269				
FREE P&P SAVE £4.95				P&P	£ FREE
				TOTAL	£

Name
Address
Postcode Tel
email

Thank you for your order. If you DO NOT wish to receive offers from carefully selected companies* please tick the box ☐
*Please see our full privacy policy at www.fifecountry.co.uk Company Reg No 15281 **Trusted for over 137 Years**

PREP
Stand pots on a pebble plate/tray

HEIGHT
Dracaena fragrans

BE BOLD
Rubber plant

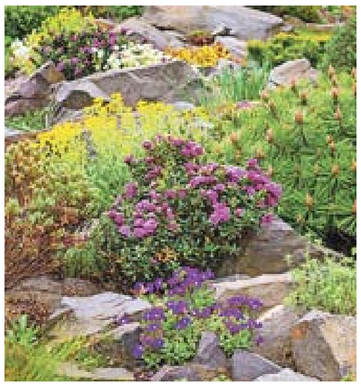
SAY CHEESE
Monstera deliciosa

PATTERN
Peacock plant

TOP 5 GARDENING JOBS

1 Check terracotta pots for frost cracks, especially around rims and drainage holes. Dry the pot, tap it gently, and look for hairline splits that widen when squeezed. You can also listen to its ring by tapping it gently – a resonating sound signifies undamaged terracotta, while a duller sound means it’s likely to have hairline cracks.

2 Rotate remaining stored squash and pumpkins once a week so they do not develop soft spots where they rest. Store them in a cool, dry, airy place, off bare concrete and away from damp walls. Inspect as you turn them and remove any fruit with mould, seepage, or a sunken patch. Learn more about growing and caring for pumpkins and squash on my YouTube channel @daviddomoney.



3 Inspect plant labels for fading while beds are quiet and access is easy. If names are disappearing, rewrite them now so you are not guessing in spring.

Pencil works as a reliable option on many plastics, and a permanent marker can work well too. If labels are failing to help, make replacements from recycled materials such as cut-up yogurt pots, old plastic blinds, or aluminium drinks cans, then punch a hole and tie them on with some twine. It also helps to keep a second label tucked slightly below the soil level as a back-up.

4 Look over rockeries for stones loosened by freeze thaw. Reposition any wobbly rocks so they are stable and slightly buried for support, and firm slumped soil back without burying alpine crowns. Top up with grit around plants to improve drainage and keep foliage off wet ground over winter.

5 Shake dead foliage from evergreen ferns to keep crowns healthy and tidy. Pull away brown fronds that come free, then snip stubborn stems close to the base. Leave green fronds in place, as they protect the crown from cold snaps and heavy rain, and they still photosynthesise on bright days.

FOCUS ON

WINTER HONEYSUCKLE

Lonicera includes wonderfully scented shrubs such as Lonicera × purpusii and Lonicera fragrantissima which earn their keep in January. It grows as a compact bush, so it slips neatly into borders and looks good near paths or a doorway.

In January and early spring, it produces small, creamy-white flowers. The scent is rich and sweet, and it carries best on still, mild days.

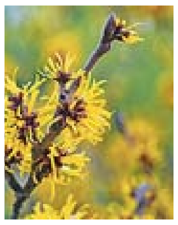
January is perfect for planting container-grown winter honeysuckle if the ground is not frozen. Choose a sheltered spot as cold winds shorten flower life and whisk fragrance away.

Work garden compost into the planting area, then set the shrub at the same depth it grew in the pot, firm gently and water in well. In containers, use a loam-based, peat-free compost and raise the pot on feet.

Prune lightly after flowering, removing a couple of older stems at the base and trimming stragglers to keep the shape balanced.

Fun fact: Lonicera × purpusii is a hybrid between Lonicera fragrantissima and Lonicera standishii, raised in Germany in the early 20th century by brothers Carl and Josef Purpus.

DID YOU KNOW?



Witch hazel (Hamamelis) has a hidden party trick – its ripe seed pods can dry, split, and ping seeds with surprising force, often a couple of metres from the parent plant.

Robins sing for much of the year to defend territory. In towns they may sing after dark under streetlights, as artificial light can extend the time they treat as daytime, especially in winter, while they also sing to attract a mate. Keep an eye out for them, and other garden birds, as over the weekend of January 23-25, you can join over half a million people taking part in the RSPB’s Big Garden Birdwatch.

To find out more and register to take part, head to rspb.org.uk/birdwatch

Snowdrops often push through hard ground because their leaves have toughened tips, helping them pierce cold, compacted soil and emerge early, ready to flower before light levels drop. This gives them a head start.

Medlar (Mespilus germanica) was once widely grown in Britain and is traditionally eaten only after “bletting” when the fruit softens, and its flavour turns mellow and toffee-like. A frost often helps the process.

SHOP YOUR NEXT BUY

Compiled by **GRACE SALMON**

TARPAULIN WATERPROOF GROUNDSHEET SHEET COVER 3X4M GREEN, *£13.99, Sue Ryder*

POLYTUNNEL WITH PE COVER, *£92.99, VonHaus*

PERFECT PROPAGATOR SELF-WATERING 23 CM, *£19.99, AllotMate Essentials*

VERVE PEAT-FREE MULTI-PURPOSE COMPOST 50L, *£7, B&Q*

GROW YOUR OWN MICROGREENS STARTER KIT, *£5.50, Little Leaf*

MIMOSA GARDENING GLOVES, *£21.99, Gisela Graham*

STAINLESS STEEL HAND POTTING SCOOP, *Dobbies Garden Centre, £19.99*

LOW LEVEL LAPLINE PLANTER *670mm x 1204mm, £134.49, Forest*

New year, new blooms

January is the perfect time to begin sowing early seeds and set up a cosy growing environment. With the right tools, you can nurture your first sprouts of the year long before spring arrives

OUTDOOR THERMOMETER WITH BIRD DESIGN, *£6.99, Homescapes*

SELF-WATERING HERB ORGANISER, *£66.90, Finnish Design Shop*

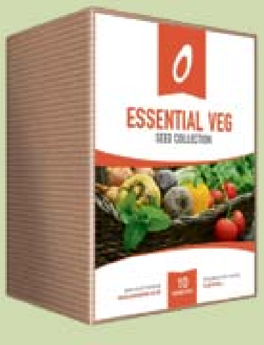
RABBITS AND BERRIES KNEELER, *£21.50, Burgon & Ball at Annabel James*

TWIST CULTIVATOR, *£19.95, Sophie Conran at Annabel James*

WINTER SOWING

ANNUALS WILDFLOWER SEEDBALL MIX GRAB BAG, *£16, Royal Botanic Gardens Kew Shop*

ONION WHITE LISBON WINTER HARDY SEED PACKET, *£3.49, Thompson & Morgan at B&Q*



ESSENTIAL VEG SEED COLLECTION, *£13.95, Sow Seeds*

Chums

MEN'S | LADIES | HOME

FLEECE LINED CHINOS

JANUARY SALE!

ALL SIZES NOW ONLY **£29** +P&P

Discreet waist adjuster gives 2" extra stretch

Super snug fleece lining

Navy

Black

THREE LENGTHS

CUSTOMER RATED ★★★★½ feefo

"Good well made trousers that keep you warm in the colder weather. They wash well and I don't have to iron them."

WAIST SIZES	WAS	OFFER	SAVE
32, 34, 36	~~£35~~	£29	**£6**
38, 40, 42, 44, 46	~~£40~~	£29	**£11**

AMAZING VALUE DIRECT FROM CHUMS!

Chums - the UK's premiere men's trouser supplier have developed this all year round Chino with a warm fleece lining throughout, ensuring you stay toasty whatever the weather. What's more, Chums have added a discreet auto expanding waistband providing up to two inches of growing room for supreme comfort. These Chinos are created in pure cotton with a polyester fleece lining and are machine washable. Tailored with two side, one hip pocket and 2 button fastening back pockets. The perfect trouser for everyday AT AMAZING LOW PRICE WHEN YOU ORDER DIRECT FROM CHUMS - JUST £29. **Available in Navy, Charcoal, Black or Dark Stone. Leg Lengths 27", 29", 31".**

ORDER ONLINE NOW – IT'S FAST, SAFE & EASY – FREE RETURNS

SHOP AT **CHUMS.CO.UK/OFFERS**

OR CALL **08715 267 166** Calls cost 13p per minute plus network extras

*FOR THESE GREAT OFFERS PLEASE QUOTE THIS SOURCE CODE **2DE26***

Chums Ltd., (Dept. 2DE26), P.O. Box 94, St Helens, Merseyside WA10 1FG
Chums offer you FREE RETURNS and complete satisfaction if you want an exchange or your money back.

Chums Ltd., (Dept. 2DE26), P.O. Box 94, St Helens, Merseyside WA10 1FG.
Please send me item(s) indicated PLEASE USE BLOCK LETTERS

ITEM NUMBER	COLOUR	SIZE	INSIDE LEG	QTY	PRICE
Order: MT030 Fleece Lined Trousers				SUB TOTAL	
				HALF PRICE P&P ~~£5.95~~	**£2.95**
				TOTAL	

I enclose Cheques / POs made payable to **Chums Ltd** for £ __________
Please write your address (inc. post code) on reverse of cheque or charge my MasterCard/Visa.

Cheque No ☐☐☐☐☐☐

mastercard ☐ VISA ☐ PLEASE TICK ✓ PLEASE DEBIT MY A/C NUMBER AS SHOWN BELOW

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

EXPIRY DATE: Month/Year /

Title ______________ Forename ______________________________

CVC: ☐☐☐

Surname ____

Address ____

____ Post Code ______________

Mobile/Telephone ______________________________________

Email ____

SOURCE CODE 2DE26

We think you'd enjoy some of the latest products and selected offers by post from other trusted retailers, charities, finance, travel, FMCG and utility companies. If you would prefer not to receive these by post, please tick this box ☐. To learn more about our trusted partners and how we use your data, see our privacy policy at www.chums.co.uk/privacy or ask for a copy when you call us. From time to time Chums would like to send you our latest catalogues, special offers and promotions by post that we think you'd appreciate as a valued customer. If you would prefer not to receive these, please tick this box ☐. Goods usually dispatched within 3 to 5 working days

Chums Ltd. Co. Reg. No. 1561474

EST. 2011
IMAGINE
CRUISING®

MEDITERRANEAN TREASURES

ENJOY COMPLIMENTARY FLIGHTS

EXPERIENCE THE BEST OF ATHENS & İSTANBUL WITH COMPLIMENTARY HOTEL STAYS

SIP, SAVOUR, & CELEBRATE WITH DRINKS, TIPS, & AN AZAMAZING EVENING®

All-Inclusive Azamara Eastern Mediterranean Voyage & İstanbul Escape

13 Nights 7 July 2026

AZAMARA CRUISES

Immerse yourself in Greece's breathtaking scenery, rich culture and timeless charm on an all-inclusive cruise, before uncovering Istanbul's historic wonders with a two-night hotel stay.

Your unforgettable holiday includes:

All-Inclusive Boutique Cruise

Embark on a **10-night all-inclusive cruise on board Azamara Onward**, where immersive travel and refined comfort define life at sea.

Savour **complimentary dining and drinks** throughout your voyage, with **pre-paid gratuities** included.

Enjoy a signature **AzAmazing Evening®**, offering a memorable cultural moment designed to bring each destination to life.

Your voyage explores **Athens**, **Syros**, **Paros**, **Santorini**, **Agios Nikolaos**, **Rhodes**, **Kuşadası**, **Patmos**, **Chios** and **Istanbul**, where you'll enjoy an **overnight in port**.

Hand-Picked Hotel Stays

A **two-night five-star stay in Istanbul** offers you time to explore the city's ottoman splendour, while a **one-night hotel stay in Athens** begins your adventure in style.

Complimentary Flights & Transfers

Travel in complete comfort with flights departing from London included, regional options available.

HOLIDAY CODE: EUR3252

CLUB INTERIOR FROM **£2,899PP**

CLUB OCEANVIEW FROM **£3,299PP**

CLUB VERANDA FROM **£3,899PP**

View this holiday online by scanning the QR code or search the cruise code on our website.

TO BOOK CALL 01793 856 779
imaginecruising.co.uk
Opening Hours: Mon - Sun: 9am - 8pm

Trustpilot ★★★★★ Excellent

ABTA ABTA No. Y6300

EST. 2011
IMAGINE
CRUISING®

For full terms and conditions please visit www.imaginecruising.co.uk. Imagine Cruising are fully ABTA and ATOL bonded. Prices are correct at the time of print and are subject to change. Prices are per person based on two adults sharing a cruise cabin and include flights from London (regional flights available at a supplement).

AT A GLANCE

STOCK MARKET

FTSE 100	10124.6	▲	+79.9
FTSE 250	23036.8	▲	+144.5
FTSE ALL SHARE	5457.8	▲	+42.0
Shares Traded	9924.3 million		

POPULAR SHARES ON THE RISE

Abrdn	209¾	+1½
AstraZeneca	14216	+40
BAE Systems	2053	+30
Barclays	485	+¼
BP	425½	+10
Centrica	181	+4¼
Convatec Group	246¼	+3½
Lloyds Banking Group	100¼	+¼
Marks & Spencer Group	353	+8¼
National Grid	1192½	+9½
Rolls-Royce Holdings	1293½	+21
Shell	2640	+78
Unilever	4744	+79
Whitbread	2634	+16

POPULAR SHARES ON THE SLIDE

Aviva	682	-8½
BT Group	181¼	-1¾
GSK	1886	-5
Haleon	367½	-4½
HSBC Holdings	1194¼	-1¼
Int Consolidated Airlines	424	-11¾
NatWest Group	642½	-1½
Saga	432½	-5½
Sainsbury (J)	311½	-17½
Tesco	415½	-6¾
Vodafone Group	101¼	-2½

WORLD MARKETS

TOKYO	51939.9	▲	+822.6
HONG KONG	26231.8	▲	+82.5
GERMANY	25261.6	▲	+134.2
FRANCE	8362.1	▲	+118.6

STERLING VALUE

Dollar	1.341	▼	-0.004
Yen	211.832	▲	+0.965
Euro	1.153	▼	-0.001

DOLLAR VALUE

Dollar/Yen	158.025	▲	+1.1680
Dollar/Euro	0.860	▲	+0.0023

COMMODITIES

GOLD($)	▲	4507.91
KRUGERRAND(£)	▲	3364.80
SILVER(pence)	▲	5983.26
BRENT CRUDE($)	▲	63.84

OTHER INDICATORS

Base rate	3.75%
Halifax mortgage rate	5.95%
Retail Price Index	+3.8% (CPI +3.2%)
House price Index	+1.7%
Unemployment	1,832,000

POWERED BY Digital Look www.DigitalLook.com

TOURIST'S POUND

Australia	1.96 dollar
Canada	1.81 dollar
China	8.78 renminbi
Czech Rep.	26.26 koruna
Denmark	8.17 krone
Eurozone	1.13 euro
Hong Kong	9.83 dollar
Hungary	416.49 forint
Israel	4.00 shekel
Japan	202.75 yen
Jordan	0.89 dinar
Mexico	22.85 peso
New Zealand	2.28 dollar
Norway	13.06 krone
Poland	4.62 zloty
Saudi Arabia	4.79 riyal
South Africa	21.29 rand
Sweden	11.79 krona
Switzerland	1.04 franc
Thailand	40.48 baht
Turkey	53.63 lira
United States	1.32 dollar

UK turnover slumps at 'X' after Elon Musk takeover

By **Jon Robinson**

PROFIT at the UK arm of X tumbled under Elon Musk's ownership as big advertisers took flight over fears about content on the social media platform.

The division's turnover slid from £69.1million to £28.8m in 2024, accounts filed late with Companies House show.

UK pre-tax profit was cut from £2.2m to £767,000.

The figures compare with a turnover of £205.3m and pre-tax profit of £8.5m that the company achieved in 2022.

Twitter was bought by billionaire Tesla chief Musk that year and later renamed X.

In a statement signed off by the board on its 2024 results, X said: "The significant decrease in the performance of the company is a result of the decline of advertising revenue, primarily driven by a reduction in spend from large brand advertisers due to concerns about brand safety, reputation and/or content moderation.

"The business continues to take proactive measures to build brand safety tools, invest in platform safety and content moderation and then educate advertisers about these initiatives."

The results were revealed as Musk came under fire after his Grok AI tool was used to create deepfake paedophile images and sexualised shots of adults.

Musk in trouble for AI deepfakes

Sir Keir Starmer demanded watchdog Ofcom takes action, adding: "It's unlawful. We're not going to tolerate it. I've asked for all options to be on the table. It's disgusting.

"And X need to get their act together and get this material down. And we will take action on this because it's simply not tolerable." Yesterday X responded by allowing only paying users to access Grok via the platform.

Downing Street said it "simply turns an AI feature that allows the creation of unlawful images into a premium service".

The PM's official spokesman said it showed X "can move swiftly when it wants to".

The scandal over content came after X's staff headcount in the UK plunged from 399 in 2022 to 76 in 2024.

Over that time, Musk's firm spent more than £22m on redundancy payments. The accounts for 2025 are due to be filed at Companies House by the end of September.

JUST EAT ON ROLL WITH FESTIVE FARE

JUST Eat says it received 145,000 orders on Christmas Day with panic-buying grocery orders accounting for 40% of deliveries, including last-minute turkeys.

Grocery and Chinese takeaway orders also helped to drive demand throughout last month for the delivery platform, with more than 17 million orders placed overall.

Commercial director Leigh Phillipson said: "December is a fast-paced month where convenience really comes into its own."

On New Year's Eve, there was a 300% surge in orders for prosecco and champagne, while New Year's Day saw sales of coconut water and sports drinks jump 132%.

Food sales were up 5.1%

Sainsbury's Christmas results Taste bittersweet

SAINSBURY'S Christmas grocery sales jumped 5.1% as customers traded up to its Taste the Difference range.

The positive results for the six weeks to January 3 were offset by a 1% drop in non-food and clothing sales and a 2.2% fall at Argos.

In its third quarter overall, Sainsbury's said like-for-like sales excluding fuel lifted 3.4%, a slowdown on the 4.3% in the previous three months.

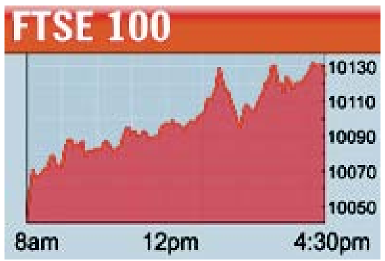
Chief executive Simon Roberts said the firm had "won grocery market share for the sixth consecutive Christmas".

He added that non-food and Argos takings were hit by cost-of-living pressures, inflation and competition from cheap online rivals Shein and Temu.

The update followed Tesco's, which reported a 3.3% rise in UK and Ireland sales over the six weeks to January 3. German discounters Aldi and Lidl said sales were up 3% and 10% respectively in the four weeks to Christmas Day.

++ THE FTSE 100 THE FTSE 100 THE FTSE 100 ++

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK	
			HIGH	LOW
3i Group	3122#	-28	4459	2999
A.B. Foods	1859#	+9	2337	1829½
Admiral Group	†			
Airtel Africa	365¼	+1	372¾	114¾
Alliance Trust	1298	+4	1324	1050
Anglo American	3216	+84	3257	2003¾
Antofagasta	3473	+137	3542	1383
Ashtead Group	5594#	+110	5600	3659
AstraZeneca	14216	+40	14332	9667
Auto Trader	593½#	+21¾	908½	568½
Aviva	682	-8½	692½	468¾
Babcock International	1469#	+19	1474	485¾
BAE Systems	2053	+30	2075	1180½
Barclays	485	+¼	488½	241¾
Barratt Development	381½	+2½	482¼	350
Beazley Group	823	+½	973	769
Berkeley Grp Hldgs	4022		4324	3462
BP	425½	+10	476¼	331¾
British Amer.Tob	4060#	+50	4421	2905
British Land	412¾#	-2½	420½	321¼
BT Group	181¼#	-1¾	222¾	138¼
Bunzl	2084	+38	3452	2032
Burberry Group	1335		1371½	627¾
Centrica	181	+4¼	181¾	132¼
Coca-Cola HBC	3938	+20	4034	2708
Compass Group	2345	-11	2843	2305
Convatec Group	246¼	+3½	295½	221¼
CRH	9652	+402	9652	6142
Croda International	2693	+38	3383	2465
DCC	4446	+32	5600	4376
Diageo	1630	+28	2555	1577
Diploma	5660	+135	5660	3624
EasyJet	502½	-2¾	587¾	427½
Entain	764¼	+8	1022	501¼
Experian Group	3478#	+70	4088	3091
F&C Inv Tst	1268#	+10	1270½	962
Flutter Entert.	16080	+125	23630	14670
Fresnillo	3506	+66	3678	644½
Games Workshop	18760#	+350	19840	12410
GlaxoSmithKline	1886	-5	1901½	1264
Glencore	452¾	+39¾	459¼	230
Haleon	367½	-4½	415¼	326½
Halma	3666#	+38	3694	2360
Hikma	1574	+24	2340	1507
Hiscox	1395	-4	1429	1035
HSBC Holdings	1194¼	-1¼	1217½	713¼
IMI	2630	+14	2658	1606
Imperial Brands	3011	-9	3312	2579
Informa	901	+10½	993½	640¼
InterContinental Htl	10271½	-3373½	10327½	5537¾
Intermediate Cap.Grp	2092#	+24	2450	1569
Intertek Group	4618		5385	4064
Intl Consolidated Airlines	424	-11¾	437	224½
JD Sports	84¼	+¼	104½	63¼
Kingfisher	322½	-4	329¾	228¼
Land Securities	644#	-1	650	499½
Legal & General	267	+2	267¾	215¼
Lloyds Banking Grp	100¼	+¼	100½	53
London & Stamford Prop	197¾	+¼	204½	170½
London Stock Ex	8952	+96	12095	8138
M&G	295¾	-¼	297¼	172¾
Marks & Spencer	353#	+8¼	411¼	318½
Melrose	625½	+1½	680	386
Mondi	917¾	+14½	1326	819
National Grid	1192½#	+9½	1193	910¾
NatWest Group	642½	-1½	665½	374½
Next	14335	+70	14580	9028
Pearson	1060	+3½	1379	984½
Pershing Square Hold	4674	+58	5090	3244
Persimmon	1396½	+5½	1405	1037½
Phoenix Group	741	-2½	746	479½
Prudential	1160½		1195½	595¼
Reckitt Benckiser	6176	+6	6262	4633
RELX	3178	+30	4135	2972
Rentokil Initial	471½	+6	474¼	309½
Rightmove	515½	+7½	823¾	498½
Rio Tinto	6006	-188	6291	4117
Rolls-Royce Group	1293½	+21	1297	563½
Sage Group	1082½#	+13½	1348	1050
Sainsbury (J)	311½	-17½	355¾	228¾
Schroders	417¾	+9	428¼	289¼
Scottish Mortgage	1211½	+10½	1213	815¼
SEGRO	732¼	-6½	743½	599
Severn Trent	2907#	+17	2908	2338
Shell	2640	+78	2931½	2291½
Smith & Nephew	1258	-11	1435	937¾
Smiths Group	2458	+16	2550	1687
Smurfit Kappa	3162	+26	4495	2558
Spirax-Sarco	7110	+170	8190	5445
SSE	2313#	+46	2315	1463½
St James's Place	1450	+14	1453	791
Standard Chartered	1794½	-12	1855½	878¾
Tesco	415½	-6¾	475½	314½
Unilever	4744	+79	6177½	4631
United Utilities	1242#	+5½	1242	937½
Vodafone Group	101¼#	-2½	104	64
Weir Group	3000	+50	3026	1984
Whitbread	2634	+16	3274	2335



Fewer shoppers hit instore sales

RETAILERS suffered a disappointing December as rising bills and food costs kept shoppers at home.

UK footfall was down 2.9% over the month year on year, according to data from the British Retail Consortium and Sensormatic.

Visits to the high street were down by 0.9% but retail park footfall fell 2.5% and shopping centres suffered badly with 5.1% fewer Christmas customers than in 2024.

BRC chief executive Helen Dickinson said: "In the face of rising bills and food costs, many consumers held off for the post-Christmas sales, with the week after Christmas the only one to see a significant uplift."

Ms Dickinson said it was the third consecutive year of annual footfall decline and described the year as a whole as "challenging".

+ BG + Barclays + BT + Centrica + Dixons Carphone + First Group + HSBC + Kingfisher + Marks & Spencer + Next + Prudential + Rolls-Royce + Sainsburys + Tesco + Unilever + Vodafone + Whitbread + WPP

SHARES AT A GLANCE

Aerospace & Defence

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
Avon Rubber	1918	+42	2180	1338
Babcock International	1469#	+19	1474	485¾
BAE Systems	2053	+30	2075	1180½
Chemring Group	541	+31	593	297½
QinetiQ Group	500½#	+15½	572	361
Rolls-Royce Group	1293½	+21	1297	563½
Senior	215½	-6	222	115¾

Alternative Energy

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
Porvair	842	+6	856	626

Banks

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
Barclays	485	+¼	488½	241¾
Bco Santander	889	+10	895	377½
Close Brothers	518	+13½	550½	208
HSBC Holdings	1194¼	-1¼	1217½	713¼
Investec	576	+10	596	414
Lloyds Banking Grp	100¼	+¼	100½	53
Metro Bank	124½	-¼	133½	81
NatWest Group	642½	-1½	665½	374½
Paragon Group	881	+4	970	686½
Standard Chartered	1794½	-12	1855½	878¾

Beverages

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
Barr (AG)	624	-1	711	558
Coca-Cola HBC	3938	+20	4034	2708
Diageo	1630	+28	2555	1577

Chemicals

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
Carclo	58½	+2	80	21
Croda International	2693	+38	3383	2465
Elementis	170½	+¾	176½	115
Johnson Matthey	2302#	+38	2324	1156
Synthomer	62¾		158¼	46
Treatt	216½	-3½	450	186½
Victrex	693	+22	1066	589

Construction & Materials

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
Balfour Beatty	722½	+7½	724½	390½
Costain Group	163¾	-½	168	86
CRH	9652	+402	9652	6142
Dialight	344	-6	364	89
Galliford Try	540	-1	547	321
Gleeson (MJ)	426	+8	538	320
Keller Group	1706	-8	1750	1240
Kier Group	228	+1	231½	115¼
Marshalls	177½	+½	293	162
Morgan Sindall	4925	+65	4975	2945
Severfield-Rowen	29½		52¼	19
Smart (J) & Co.	132½#		135	110

Electricity

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
Drax Group	891½	+2	896½	536½
SSE	2313#	+46	2315	1463½
Telecom Plus	1376	+18	2085	1340

Electronic & Electrical Equipment

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
Acal	604#	+3	738	486
Halma	3666#	+38	3694	2360
Oxford Instruments	2110#	-15	2185	1500
Renishaw	3710	+65	3725	2145
TT Electronics	112	+1½	154	73
XP Power	920	+24	1314	621

Equity Investment Instruments

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
Aberdeen Asian Sml	378	+3	380	256
Aberforth Smll.Co.	1610	+10	1614	1212
Acorn Income				
Albion Tech.& Gen. VCT	66		71	64½
Alliance Trust	1298	+4	1324	1050
Aurora Inv.Tst.	275	+1	277	212½
AVI Global Tst	259½	+1	266½	202
Baillie Gifford Japan	936	+22	951	657
Baillie Gifford Shin Nip	134½	+2¾	136½	95½
Bankers Inv.Tst	135½	+¾	136½	101
Baronsmead VCT.2	48½		52	46½
BH Macro GBP	404		414	371½
Biotech Growth Trust	1260	+15	1285	620
BlackRock Mining	908	+22	909	406½
Bluehone AiM VCT2	28¼#		31	27¼
British Assets Tst	27½	-¼	49¼	26¼
Brunner Inv.Tst	1480	+6	1490	1140
Caledonia Inv.	381		391½	334½
City Natural Res.Yld	372	+11	373	165¾
City Of London	541	+3	542	411½
Dunedin Ent.IT.				
Dunedin Income	310	+2	311	262
Edin Wwide Inv	227½	+1½	229½	143
Edin.Inv.Tst.	831	+6	839	680
Edin.US Tracker	382#	+2	385	289½
Elderstreet VCT	38¾		41	36¾
F&C Cap&Inc.	351	+2	352	287
F&C Inv Tst	1268#	+10	1270½	962
F&C Smaller Cos	181½#	+1¾	181½	136½
F&C US Smaller Companies	1420	+25	1522½	1115
Fidelity Asian	612	+4	628	454
Fidelity European	430½	+6½	432½	338½
Fidelity Special	423½#	+1½	425	295½
Finsbury Gwth&In	837	+13	962	795
Foresight Tech.VCT	65½		75½	62
Genesis E.M.F.	1098		1106	632
Graphite Ent	1512	+8	1600	1070
Hansa Tst 'A'	270	+1	272	190
Hansa Tst Plc	274	+4	278	192½
Henderson Far Est	244½	-½	253½	190½
Henderson High Inc	192#	+1½	192¾	151
Herald Inv.Tst.	2640	+180	2660	1738
HGCapital Tst.	509	+2	538	448
HSBC Infrastructure	117½	-½	125¼	106
Impax Env.Mkt	403	+2½	416½	310½
Int.Biotech.Tst.	986#	+18	996	480
International Public	126½		127¾	107¾
Invesco Asia	438#	-1	447	300
Invesco Perp UK	380	+6	386	313½
JPM American	1130	+10	1186	869
JPM Asian	471	+1	471½	331½
JPM Claverhouse	884	+4	886	660
JPM Emerg Mkt	143	+½	143½	95
JPM Euro Sml Co.	612#	+1	613	444½
JPM Global Emerging	176#	+1½	176	118½
JPM Indian	1004	-12	1106	904
JPM Japanese	737#	+18	747	493
JPM Overseas IT	585	+4	610	480
JPM Smaller Co	330	+2	338	253
JPM US Sml Co.	418	+7	516	338
Jupiter Euro.	934	+7	959	757
JZ Capital Partners	189		220	184
Law Debenture	1098#	+6	1104	788
Lowland Invest Co	164½#	+1½	165	114½
Majedie Inv.	276	+3	280	230
Manchester&Lon.	814	-1	944	512
Martin Currie Prtflo Tst	358#	-1	386	295
Maven Income And Growth VCT	33½#		38	32½
Mercantile Inv Tst	262½#	+½	263½	202½
Merchants Tst	608	+5	609	474
Mid Wynd Int.	790	+6	836	664
Monks Inv.Tst.	1552	+2	1560	1036
Montanaro Euro Tst	169	+1½	183½	138
Montanaro Uk	104	+1½	106½	87¾
Murray Inc.Tst.	932	+8	938	754
Murray Int.Tst	332#	+1½	335	239
New India	768	-6	832	686
New Star Inv.Tst.	127	+1	129	100
North Atl.Smlr.Tst				
Northern 2 VCT	53½#		57	52½
Northern Venture	56½#		58½	55½
Oxford Tech 2 VCT	6½		7	5½
Pacific Assets	373		378	302
Pacific Horizon	828	+4	832	507
Pantheon Int.	383	+2½	383	266
Pershing Square Hold	4674	+58	5090	3244
Polar Cap.Tech	479½	+8	481	255½
RCM Technology Trust	540	+5	548	307
RIT Capital Partners	2215		2275	1722
Ruffer Investment	296	+½	304	264½
Schroder Asia	690#	+2	693	461½
Schroder Inc.	354#	+3	355	255
Schroder Japan	331#	+9	331	209
Schroder UK	209	+3	210	158½
Schroder UK M&S	728	+8	730	520
Scottish American	517	+3	525	454½
Scottish Mortgage	1211½	+10½	1213	815¼
Shires Inc.	310#	+2½	316½	222
Small Comp Div.Tst	142	+5	161	124
Standard Life Equity	408#	+3	410	288½
Standard Life UK Sml	515	+2	531	426
Temple Bar	383½	+4	386½	258
Templeton Emrg.	247#	+1	248	151¾
The European Inv.Tst	110#	+½	110	84
Throgmorton Tst.	633	+2	636	469
TR Euro.Growth	224	+2	224½	163
TR Prop. IT	329		338½	277½
Witan Pacific	313	-2	322	214
Wwide Healthcare	386#	-2½	397	265½

Financial Services

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
3i Group	3122#	-28	4459	2999
3i Infrastructure	378#	+½	381½	301
Abrdn	209¾	+1½	212¼	123¾
Ashmore Group	184¾	+6¾	193	125
Guinness Peat Group	85	+1¾	96	68¼
IG Group	1319		1344	913
Intermediate Cap.Grp.	2092#	+24	2450	1569
International Pers Fin	237	+1½	237	121½
IP Group	56¾		65	34¾
Jupiter Fund Man.	172¾	+1½	173½	68
Liontrust Asset Man	243	+6	458	231½
London Stock Ex.	8952	+96	12095	8138
M&G	295¾	-¼	297¼	172¾
Man Group	255¾	+8½	255¾	154¾
Provident Financial	115	-2	128½	45
Rathbone Brothers	2025	+49	2045	1406
S & U	2230	+10	2250	1330
Schroders	417¾	+9	428¼	289¼
St James's Place	1450	+14	1453	791
Tullett Prebon.	253½	+1	311½	228
Walker Crips Group	13¼		15¾	7½

Fixed Line Telecommunications

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
Airtel Africa	365¼	+1	372¾	114¾
BT Group.	181¼#	-1¾	222¾	138¼

Food & Drug Retailers

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
Greggs	1636	-21	2234	1418
Marks & Spencer	353#	+8¼	411¼	318½
Ocado	271¾	+4¾	395½	172¼
Sainsbury (J)	311½	-17½	355¾	228¾
Tesco	415½	-6¾	475½	314½

Food Producers

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
A.B. Foods	1859#	+9	2337	1829½
Anglo-Eastern	1390	+10	1425	602
Carr's Milling	134	+1	157	101½
Cranswick	4950#	+80	5490	4625
Glanbia	1318¾	+43½	1370¾	789½
Greencore Group	238#	-5½	278½	169¼
Kerry Grp 'A' Shs	6524½	+347	8762¾	6177¼
Premier Foods	170¾	+1¾	214½	167
REA Holdings	129	+1	129¾	61½
Tate & Lyle	368¾	+8½	661	358

Gas, Water & Multiutilities

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
Centrica	181	+4¼	181¾	132¼
National Grid	1192½#	+9½	1193	910¾
Pennon Group	549	+2	552	387½
Severn Trent	2907#	+17	2908	2338
United Utilities	1242#	+5½	1242	937½

General Industrials

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
Bunzl	2084	+38	3452	2032
Goodwin	23300	+800	23500	6180
Melrose	625½	+1½	680	386
Mondi	917¾	+14½	1326	819
Smiths Group	2458	+16	2550	1687
Smurfit Kappa	3162	+26	4495	2558

General Retailers

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
ASOS	297½	-6	436½	218½
Auto Trader	593½#	+21¾	908½	568½
B&M Europ Value Ret	173¼	+2¾	344½	155¼
Caffyns	425		500	415
Dixons Carphone	131½#	-½	146	82
Dunelm	1167	+7	1232	858½
Frasers Group	694		770	546
Halfords Group	146¾#	+2½	174½	116¼
Headlam Group	47		142	44¾
Howden Joinery	852½	+11½	914½	679½
Inchcape	783	+7½	808	638
JD Sports	84¼	+¼	104½	63¼
Kingfisher	322½	-4	329¾	228¼
Next	14335	+70	14580	9028
Pets At Home	197#	-2¾	273¼	192¾
RM Group	114	+1	118	82
Topps Tiles	44#	-1¼	50	29
WH Smith	643½	+8	1307	613½

Health Care Equipment & Services

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
Convatec Group	246¼	+3½	295½	221¼
Flying Brands	+¾		2	+½
Smith & Nephew	1258	-11	1435	937¾

Household Goods & Home Construction

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
Barratt Development	381½	+2½	482¼	350
Bellway	2788#	-22	2982	2166
Berkeley Grp Hldgs	4022		4324	3462
Bovis Homes	686¾	+13¼	698	510¾
Mcbride	146		159	99¼
Persimmon	1396½	+5½	1405	1037½
Reckitt Benckiser	6176	+6	6262	4633
Taylor Wimpey	108¾	+¾	123¼	93

Industrial Engineering

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
Bodycote	742½	+5½	748½	460½
Hill & Smith	2295	+25	2315	1530
IMI	2630	+14	2658	1606
Morgan Crucible	231	+1½	274	177½
Northgate	386#	-3	395	273½
Rotork	340½	+3½	352	275¾
Spirax-Sarco	7110	+170	8190	5445
Vesuvius	425½	+4¼	427¼	313¾
Weir Group	3000	+50	3026	1984
Xaar	102½	-4	145	59

Industrial Metals & Mining

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
Castings	277	+1½	319	234
Evraz				
Ferrexpo	72	-½	110¾	44¼

Industrial Transportation

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
Braemar Shipping Serv	230#	+8	278	201
Clarkson	4165	+180	4505	2995
FirstGroup	190½	+2¼	233	146½
Fisher (J) & Sons	374	+2	403	285

Leisure Goods

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
Games Workshop	18760#	+350	19840	12410
Photo-Me Intl.	148½	+½	230	146¼

Life Insurance

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
Aviva	682	-8½	692½	468¾
Chesnara	304	+½	304½	212¾
Legal & General	267	+2	267¾	215¼
Phoenix Group	741	-2½	746	479½
Prudential	1160½		1195½	595¼

Media

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
4imprint Group	4165	+190	6030	3035
Bloomsbury Publish.	479	+1	672	468
Future	522	-1½	1029	517
Informa	901	+10½	993½	640¼
ITV	81¼	+1¼	87¾	66¼
Pearson	1060	+3½	1379	984½
Reach	56¼	+¾	88¼	53
STV Group	117		208	103
Wilmington Group	295		387	289½
WPP Group	349¾	+10½	787¾	269

Mining

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
Anglo American	3216	+84	3257	2003¾
Anglo Pacific	123#	+4¼	123¾	50
Antofagasta	3473	+137	3542	1383
BHP Billiton	2296	-24	2403	1609½
Endeavour Mining	3894	-204	4162	1485
Fresnillo	3506	+66	3678	644½
Gem Diamonds	2¾		12	2¾
Glencore	452¾	+39¾	459¼	230
Hochschild Mining	523	+8½	530	168
Kenmare Res.	257½	+1½	436	227
Petra Diamonds	17¼	-½	30½	10½
Rio Tinto	6006	-188	6291	4117

Mobile Telecommunications

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
Vodafone Group	101¼#	-2½	104	64

Nonequity Investment Instruments

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
Oryx Int.Gwth.	1260	+22½	1392½	1042½
Rights &Iss.Inc	2030	-5	2280	1670

Nonlife Insurance

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
Admiral Group				
Beazley Group	823	+½	973	769
Hiscox	1395	-4	1429	1035
Lancashire	603	-5	694	523

Oil & Gas Producers

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
BP	425½	+10	476¼	331¾
Cairn Energy	220	-5	331½	183
Enquest	10½	+¼	16½	9¾
Gulf Keystone Pet.	176	+3½	224½	148¾
Harbour Energy	191	+5	294	151¼
Shell	2640	+78	2931½	2291½
Soco International	21#	-¼	27½	18
Tullow Oil	6½		23¾	4

Oil Equipment, Services & Distribution

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
Hunting	392	+4	396½	246½
John Wood Group	24½		72½	17¼

Personal Goods

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
Burberry Group	1335		1371½	627¾
PZ Cussons	71½	+½	88¼	66
Unilever	4744	+79	6177½	4631

Pharmaceuticals & Biotechnology

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
AstraZeneca	14216	+40	14332	9667
Genus	2540	-25	2715	1424
GlaxoSmithKline	1886	-5	1901½	1264
Haleon	367½	-4½	415¼	326½
Hikma	1574	+24	2340	1507
Ovoca Gold	1¼			
Oxford Biomedica	730	-21	751	232½

Real Estate Investment & Services

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
Boot (Henry)	226	+6	237	196
Cardiff Property	2700		2700	2540
CLS Holdings	60¼	-¼	78½	53½
Foxtons	58	-½	68¼	52¼
Harworth Group	166½	-1½	189½	159
Mountview Est.	9300	+100	10200	8700
Panther Secs.	285		320	280
Rightmove	515½	+7½	823¾	498½
Savills	1034	+4	1110	871
Wynnstay Props.	875		875	680

Real Estate Investment Trusts

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
Big Yellow Group	1056#	-2	1180	848
British Land	412¾#	-2½	420½	321¼
Capital & Counties	144¾	-2¼	161¼	113½
Derwent London	1850	-36	2096	1608
Grainger	194½	-2½	228	177½
Great Portland Est.	328	-1½	363	262
Hammerson	348¼	+1	351¼	220½
Helical Bar	192¼#	-¾	240	171¾
Land Securities	644#	-1	650	499½
London & Stamford Prop	197¾	+¼	204½	170½
Primary Health	103¼	+½	103½	86¼
SEGRO	732¼	-6½	743½	599
Town Centre	123½	-3	149	117
Unite Group	574½	+2½	879½	510
Value & Income	203#	+2¾	215	173
Workspace Group	415½#	-3½	478½	362

Software & Computer Services

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
Computacenter	3168	-44	3232	2024
Intec Telecom				
Microgen	295	-3½	344	255
Moneysupermarket	190¼	+3¾	221½	180½
Pendragon	353½	+3½	558	296
RELX	3178	+30	4135	2972
Sage Group	1082½#	+13½	1348	1050
Triad Group	250		400	240

Support Services

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
Ashtead Group	5594#	+110	5600	3659
Capita Group	405½		414½	175
DCC	4446	+32	5600	4376
Diploma	5660	+135	5660	3624
Essentra	95	+2	126¼	89¾
Experian Group	3478#	+70	4088	3091
Ferguson	17560#	+440	19470	11670
Hays	52¼	+¾	88¼	51½
Intertek Group	4618		5385	4064
Johnson Service	136¾	-1¼	159½	122¾
London Security	2850		3800	2750
Macfarlane Group	72	+¼	120½	62¾
Mears Group	358	-5½	417½	311½
Michael Page	227	+3¾	341¼	219½
Mitie Group	169¾#	-1	171½	106½
Norish	18½		18¾	14
Paypoint	460½	-5½	853	438½
Rentokil Initial	471½	+6	474¼	309½
Robert Walters	136	-6	324	116
RS Group	653½	+13	681½	487¼
Serco Group	294½	+3¼	295¾	147
SIG	9¾	-¼	18	8½
Smiths News	69¼#	+1¼	77½	47½
Speedy Hire	24¾#	-¾	32¼	18
SThree	181¾	+½	289½	137½
Travis Perkins	667	+7½	714	494
Trifast	71		87½	59
Vitec Group	11¼	-1¼	142	11

Technology Hardware & Equipment

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
BATM Advanced	16¼		19¾	13

Tobacco

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
British Amer.Tob	4060#	+50	4421	2905
Imperial Brands	3011	-9	3312	2579

Travel & Leisure

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
888 Holdings	22¼	-¼	74	21
Carnival	2361	-12	2406	1134
Celtic	199		208	142½
Compass Group	2345	-11	2843	2305
Domino's Pizza	179½	-¼	302¾	167¼
EasyJet	502½	-2¾	587¾	427½
Entain	764¼	+8	1022	501¼
Flutter Entert.	16080	+125	23630	14670
Fuller Smith & Turner	738		742	508
Heavitree	220		280	200
InterContinental Htl	10272¼	+93¼	10328¼	5538¼
Intl Consolidated Airlines	424	-11¾	437	224½
Irish Continental Uts	547½	+10	560	380
Marston's	67	+¼	69	33¼
Mitchells & Butlers	275	+2	291½	208½
National Express	23	+1	78	21
Rank Group	99½	+1½	160½	77¾
Saga	432½	-5½	439½	111½
Wetherspoon (JD)	755½	-4	804	541
Whitbread	2634	+16	3274	2335

AIM

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
Alumasc Group	255	-7½	395	232
Arbuthnot Banking	880		1100	837½
Boohoo	21½	-½	31½	10½
Camellia	5050		6050	4090
Churchill China	330	+5	710	324½
CML Microsystems	270	-10	335	210
Colefax Group	955	-10	980	750
CPP Group	80	+1	162	68½
Cropper (James)	400	+5	410	132½
Falkland Islands	260#	+11	316¾	162½
Fevertree Drinks	830	+5	998	611½
Filtronic	168½	-1½	181	82½
James Halstead	138½	+2½	181½	133
Mothercare	2½		4¼	2¼
Mpac Group	320		586	270
Naked Wine	75¼	+¾	93½	43
Nichols	972	+14	1465	930
Northamber	31½#		34	26
Portmeirion	100	+3	189	94
Regal Petroleum	16¼	+¾	26½	14½
Rockhopper Exploratn	71½	+½	87¾	33¼
Ten Alps	46½	-1	73	46½
Titon Holdings	97½		97½	69
Volex	434½	+6½	436	198¾
Young & Co Brewery A.	790	+4	992	714

EXPRESS.co.uk
Get more from your favourite newspaper
NEWS
PICTURES
VIDEOS
iTunes
Google play

The service is provided for general information only and is not intended to address individual requirements. Appropriate independent advice should be obtained before making investment decisions. Reasonable care will be taken in ensuring the accuracy of the information provided but it may include errors, omissions or inaccuracies.

# Ex-dividend * Ex-rights a Ex-All c Ex-capitalisation † Shares suspended

This newspaper observes the Editors' Code of Practice enforced by IPSO, the Independent Press Standards Organisation. Details can be found at www.ipso.co.uk.

ADVERTISEMENT

DRIVERS: BLINDED BY BRIGHT HEADLIGHTS? SEE CLEARLY AGAIN!

Ministers act as drivers complain of "dangerous" headlight dazzle!

WITHOUT

Modern headlights dazzle and distort your vision, turning winter roads into a blur of blinding glare and reflection.

NOW ENJOY SAFER WINTER DRIVING!

WITH

Advanced polarised lenses reduce glare instantly – so you can see the road, not the blinding headlights.

Even fit comfortably over existing glasses!

Protective UV lenses

Modern polarised lenses finished with the latest anti-glare 'TAC' coating

British Standard compliant
BS EN ISO 12312

Smart, stylish wraparound design

Beat dazzling headlights this winter and save £6! BUY NOW

NEW! Anti-Glare Glasses bring instant relief from dangerous, dazzling headlights to give you sharper, safer night-driving vision

- **REDUCES GLARE FROM ONCOMING HEADLIGHTS**
  Cuts harsh LED & Xenon dazzle to keep you focused and comfortable while driving.
- **IMPROVES CLARITY & CONTRAST IN THE DARK**
  Sharpens detail on the road to help you spot bends, signs and hazards sooner.
- **FIT OVER YOUR OWN GLASSES COMFORTABLY**
  Lightweight wraparound frame sits easily over glasses with no pinching or pressure.
- **PERFECT FOR WINTER DRIVING CONDITIONS!**
  Ideal for low light, wet roads and glare – drive safely and confidently all winter.

NIGHT driving has become an increasing challenge for millions of UK motorists this winter. Recent reports from the BBC suggest ministers have launched a review of headlight standards after a surge in complaints from drivers "blinded" by the harsh glare of modern beams.

The latest RAC research shows three-quarters of drivers say glare is worse than ever – and a third avoid driving at night. Older motorists, whose eyes take longer to recover from bright light, are most affected.

DARKER NIGHTS STILL TO COME

As shorter days and longer nights set in, that's unwelcome news if you rely on your car in the winter months.

"It actually hurts my eyes, it's so bright," said one BBC listener. "I try to avoid driving at night now - it's such a horrible experience."

BUY NOW!
Anti Glare Glasses

But avoiding the roads at night isn't always an option. Growing numbers of British drivers are turning to anti-glare glasses to cut the blinding effects of modern LED and Xenon headlight beams, and to minimise the bright reflections from wet roads.

Their advanced polarised lenses help reduce glare without dimming your vision, sharpening contrast and clarity in low light. They're lightweight and comfortable to wear – even over your glasses – they're helping drivers see more clearly and drive safely again this winter.

■ **SAVE £6! Order now for just £12.99 each, or buy two pairs for £19.98 - only £9.99 a pair! But hurry...they're already going fast! Call, click online or post the coupon today.**

WINTER OFFER
SAVE £6!

1 PAIR
£12.99 +P&P

2 PAIRS
£19.98 +P&P

See coupon for p&p

FROM AS LITTLE AS £9.99 +P&P A PAIR

Call 0800 472 5030, visit pressplaydeals.co.uk/drive or post the coupon today.

SAVE £6! LIMITED TIME WINTER DRIVING OFFER

Why our glasses stand apart from the rest

While many "night vision" or "anti-glare" glasses claim to improve night driving, ours provides independently verified, regulation-compliant proof of performance.

How our glasses work – the Science Bit:

- 79 % visible-light transmission for optimal clarity in low light - bright enough for night driving but dark enough to block glare
- 0 % UV leakage (complete UVA/UVB protection)
- 90.2 % polarisation efficiency – nearly 50 % higher than the minimum industry requirement
- Premium TAC Optical Lenses
- Fully Certified to UK Standards

WINTER OFFER
1 PAIR ONLY £12.99
2 PAIRS £19.98 - SAVE £6
PLUS P&P (SEE COUPON)

Freephone Orderline: 0800 472 5030

QUOTE MEDIA CODE
DG0118

Speak to someone in our UK Call Centre who will assist with your order. LINES OPEN Mon-Sat 7am-9pm; Sun 8am-8pm

Or visit www.pressplaydeals.co.uk/drive

PRIORITY ORDER COUPON

Please post to: Pressplay Ltd, (Dept DG0118),
Unit 7A, Chelmsford Road Ind. Estate, Great Dunmow, Essex CM6 1HD

ITEM	PRICE	QTY	SUBTOTAL
1 Pair Anti Glare Driving Glasses	£12.99		
SAVE £6! 2 Pairs Anti Glare Driving Glasses	£19.98		
Add £4.95 p&p or £7.95 for priority despatch (order before 2pm weekdays)			£4.95 / £7.95
		GRAND TOTAL £	

I enclose cheque / PO payable to **Pressplay Ltd**
(please write name and address on reverse) for £:_______________
Or please charge my MASTERCARD / VISA / MAESTRO account:

Start Date:
Expiry Date:
Security Code
Issue No.
(Maestro Card)

Name

Address

Postcode

Tel No

Email

Estimated despatch within 48 hours from receipt of your order but please allow up to 7 working days for delivery. *Only mainland UK areas – check your post code with our operator. By engaging with our services, your contact details may be shared with trusted partners for relevant marketing. You can opt out of marketing anytime, withdraw consent easily and your data won't be shared without permission. By placing your order, you agree to this use. Learn more or update preferences at pressplaydeals.co.uk

PRESSPLAY

EST. 2011
IMAGINE
CRUISING®

EXCLUSIVE BALCONY PROMOTION

SAVE UP TO £1,600
PER COUPLE*

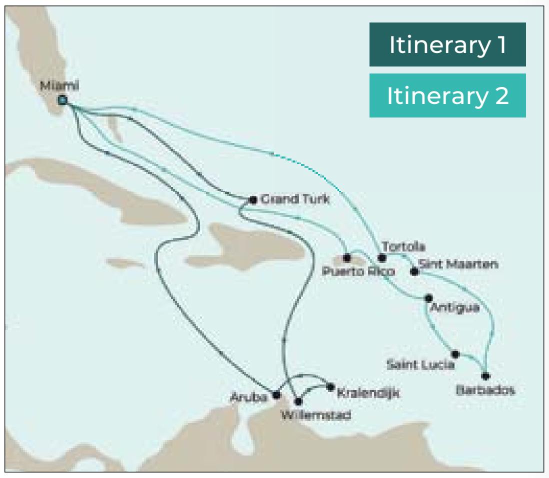
LCONY PROMOTION • BALCONY PROMOTION • BALCONY PROMOTION • BALCONY PROMOTION • BALCONY PROMOTION • BALCONY PROMOTION • BALCONY PROMOTION • BALCONY PROMOTION

CUNARD

Choose Your Voyage

Two journeys. One incomparable Cunard experience.

Discover the timeless elegance of Cunard and choose the voyage that speaks to you. Both sailings offer the same signature luxury - choose the itinerary that matches your sense of adventure.



Luxury Cunard Queen Elizabeth Caribbean Voyage & Miami Escape

11 Nights | Oct - Dec 2026

Itinerary 1:
Miami, Grand Turk, Willemstad, Kralendijk, Aruba, Miami

Full-Board Cruise
9 night full-board cruise on board Queen Elizabeth

Complimentary Hotel Stay
1 night four-star hotel stay in Miami

All Flights & Transfers
London departure – regional flights available

Overnight flight

Balcony from

£1,599pp^

SAVE UP TO £1,500 PER COUPLE*	
INSIDE	£1,599PP^
OBSTRUCTED VIEW BALCONY	£1,599PP^
CLEARVIEW BALCONY	£1,799PP^
GRILL SUITE	£3,499PP^

^Prices shown based on 26 October 2026 departure.

HOLIDAY CODE: AME8282

Ultimate Immersive Caribbean Escape: Luxury Cunard Voyage & Miami Stay

14 Nights | Oct & Nov 2026

Itinerary 2:
Miami, San Juan, St. John's, Castries, Barbados, Philipsburg, Tortola, Miami

Full-Board Cruise
12 night full-board cruise on board Queen Elizabeth

Complimentary Hotel Stay
1 night four-star hotel stay in Miami

All Flights & Transfers
London departure – regional flights available

Overnight flight

Balcony from

£1,799pp+

SAVE UP TO £1,600 PER COUPLE*	
INSIDE	£1,799PP+
OBSTRUCTED VIEW BALCONY	£1,799PP+
CLEARVIEW BALCONY	£2,049PP+
GRILL SUITE	£3,899PP+

+Prices shown based on 14 October 2026 departure.

HOLIDAY CODE: AME8283

View this holiday online by scanning the QR code or search the cruise code on our website.

TO BOOK CALL 01793 856 779
imaginecruising.co.uk
Opening Hours: Mon - Sun: 9am - 8pm

Trustpilot ★★★★★ Excellent

ABTA
ABTA No. Y6300
ATOL 11078 PROTECTED

EST. 2011
IMAGINE
CRUISING®

For full terms and conditions please visit www.imaginecruising.co.uk. Imagine Cruising are fully ABTA and ATOL bonded. Prices are correct at the time of print and are subject to change. Prices are per person based on two adults sharing a cruise cabin or suite and include flights from London (regional flights available at a supplement). Holiday duration includes overnight flights when applicable and is subject to change. *Prices shown include discount and savings based on two passengers sharing, booking directly with Imagine Cruising.

EXPRESS WINS

WIN UP TO 1000% MATCH UP BONUS

TELEPHONE
UNLUCKY
100% BONUS
300% BONUS
300% BONUS
SPIN
1000% BONUS
500% BONUS
SPIN AGAIN
200% BONUS
UNDERGROUND
29

JOIN TODAY AT

EXPRESSWINS.CO.UK

SCAN ME

WHEN THE FUN STOPS STOP BeGambleAware.org 18+

New players only, £10 min fund, £1,000 max bonus, max bonus conversion equal to lifetime deposits (up to £250), 65x wagering requirements and full T&Cs apply

Winter Sale Reader Offer in partnership with **Yimbly.com**

SLIM LINE MULTI-FUNCTION RISER RECLINER

Now **£447.92** was £629.99

Save **28%**

Scan to order online

Available in 4 colours:

● Black ● Burgundy ● Cream ● Grey

Designed for comfort, support, and contemporary living, the Corcoran Electric Riser Recliner perfectly combines sleek design with practical assistance.

Whether you need a little help rising to your feet or just a comfortable place to unwind, the Corcoran is built with you in mind. Its electric lift mechanism gently tilts the chair forward to reduce strain on knees and joints, helping you stand with ease. The recline function is also fully adjustable, allowing you to stop at your preferred position and enjoy tailored support throughout the day.

> “My new chair is perfect for my small frame and fits well in my living room. The high back is very comfortable. The vibration and heating features are great. The price is great too as I paid double for the chair this one is replacing.
>
> ★★★★★
> **Joyce C**

SLEEK DESIGN WITH STRENGTH AT ITS CORE

This high-backed recliner is constructed from a solid, hard wooden frame and upholstered in bonded leather for durability and style. With a compact footprint and clean finish, it's ideal for both modern and traditional interiors. The chair supports up to 130kg, offering strong and stable seating in a refined profile that doesn't overwhelm the room.

RELAXATION THAT WORKS FOR YOU

Massage points are built into the seat, lower, and upper back, helping relieve common aches and stiffness. A gentle warming function in the lumbar region adds soothing comfort, particularly appreciated in colder weather or at the end of a busy day. The Corcoran delivers more than just a seat, it's a sanctuary of calm.

DELIVERED AND INSTALLED WITH CARE

From setup to sit-down, the Corcoran is hassle-free. It's delivered by a two-man team who'll install it in the room of your choice, no tools, no lifting, just comfort from the moment it arrives.

- ✓ Electrically operated rise and recline
- ✓ Warming lumbar heat function
- ✓ Massage points in the seat, lower and upper back
- ✓ Bonded leather upholstery
- ✓ H107 x W76 x D92 cm

yimbly.com/Offer105 Quote **Offer105** Offer ends 31st January

UK Customer Service 0161 444 9879 | **Now Open 7 Days a Week**

VISA PayPal Pay G Pay

Offers subject to availability. Terms and Conditions apply. Free Delivery over £50. Customer Service operates 9.00am - 5.00pm, Monday - Friday, and 9.00am - 1.00pm, Saturday and Sunday, except on Bank Holidays. Calls are charged at your standard network rate. Visit yimbly.com/terms for full details, including Delivery & Returns information. For queries, contact support@yimbly.com.

Trustpilot ★★★★★

Racing

William HILL

GET ALL THE BREAKING SPORTS NEWS ONLINE @ express.co.uk/sport

BOOM TOWN

Warwick's fences can keep Festival winner focused

TOW PATH Front-running Myretown will take all the beating in the Classic Chase

DEREK FOX can work his magic on MYRETOWN (2.55) in the William Hill Half A Mill Classic Handicap Chase at Warwick.

The Lucinda Russell and Michael Scudamore-trained gelding made all of the running and raced away by 11 lengths in last season's Ultima Chase over 3m 1f.

However, sometimes Myretown makes the odd jumping error, which was the case when he exited at the ninth fence of the Coral Gold Cup at Newbury in November.

But the five fences in quick succession along Warwick's back straight will hopefully keep my selection focused for Fox, who took this on Russell's 2017 Grand National hero One For Arthur in the same season.

Prominent horses are often hard to catch and although there are others in the line-up too, Myretown shrugged off pace pressure at the Cheltenham Festival.

THE SCOUT
MELISSA JONES
Britain's top tipster

MOON ROCKET (1.52) gets the nod in a competitive running of the Grade Two William Hill Price Boosts Every Day Hampton Novices' Chase, as the six-year-old has speed and stamina to thrive at this circuit.

If recapturing his best form on ground he handles well, **LORD SNOOTIE** (3.32) is on a workable mark for the Pertemps Network Handicap Hurdle.

Thirty three days after encountering revitalised and reopposing rival Atreides, **LE GALLI BIER** (1.15) is fancied to build on his initial experience for Gary, below, and Josh Moore.

Following her return from an absence, mud-loving grey **BEST WOMEN** (2.25) should give it a good go from the front at an each-way price in the William Hill Racing Each Way Extra Handicap Hurdle.

The £100,000 Coral Lanzarote Handicap Hurdle is the feature race at Kempton Park, where Ben Pauling's **LANESBOROUGH** (3.17) is a worthy favourite.

Diamond Boy's son looks a real improver and he will have to be to defy a 14lb higher mark for dotting up last time out.

But the mount of Ben Jones settled matters quickly at Doncaster, pulling away from a subsequent winner by eight-and-a-half lengths and 2m 5f is expected to suit him well.

PRECIOUS MAN (1.30) lost both front shoes on his eye-catching debut for Dan Skelton and can go one better in the Coral Racing Club Join For Free Juvenile Hurdle.

The youngest member of the Grade Two Coral Silviniaco Conti Chase field, **KALIF DU BERLAIS** (2.40), can atone for his Haldon Gold Cup defeat.

Set some stiff tasks in recent months, course and distance scorer **THE DOYEN CHIEF** (2.05) is tipped to get back to winning ways in the Coral 'New' Horse Racing Bet Builder Handicap Chase.

WESTERN DIEGO (1.40) has had only a couple of chances in handicaps and he targets Fairyhouse's Grade Three Bet With Tote Dan & Joan Moore Memorial Handicap Chase.

LINGFIELD SKYSPORTSRACING

THE SCOUT

11.40	Dandy Khan	1.47	King Of Charm
12.10	Call Glory	2.20	Hint Of Humour
12.40	Secret Road	3.00	ACCRUAL
1.10	Siam Ruby	3.38	Tortured Soul

11.40 HANDICAP
£3,768 (Class 6) 1m 1yds (9 declared)

1	(9)	42133-1	**FRANCESI (9) (C&D)**	A Carroll 7 9-9	**Myla Coppins(7)**	73
2	(7)	447347-	**REDDEEF (47)**	Michael Keady 4 9-9	**D Keenan**	★75
3	(4)	412235-	**POETIC FORCE (86) (C,D)**	A Carroll 12 9-8	**M Slater(7)**	67
4	(8)	2L205-3	**SUPER HIT (4) (D)**	Darryll Holland 5 9-8	**R Hornby**	73
5	(1)	41112-1	● **DANDY KHAN (7) (C&D)**	J Boyle 4 9-7	**H Crouch**	74
6	(6)	513474-	**AMBER HONEY (11) (D)**	E Dunlop 4 9-5	**H Davies**	73
7	(2)	253512-	**THREE ON THURSDAY (14) (C)**	A Carroll 4 9-5	**N Callan**	73
8	(3)	240L66-	**CITY OF YORK (28) (D)**	D M Simcock 6 9-3	**L Morris**	70
9	(5)	804535-	**STACEY RACEY (124)**	Kieran Burke 5 8-8	**Josephine Gordon**	73

BLINKERS: No. 6 TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 2, 4 CHEEK PIECES: No. 4.

SP FORECAST: 11-4 Francesi, 3 Dandy Khan, 6 Three On Thursday, 7 Super Hit, 10 Stacey Racey, Amber Honey, Reddeef, 12 Poetic Force, 16 City Of York.

2025: No corresponding race.

12.10 CLASSIFIED STAKES (DIV 1)
£3,454 (6) 7f 1yds (9)

1	(1)	44027-1	● **CALL GLORY (6)**	I Williams 5 10-0	**R Kavanagh(5)**	57
2	(5)	L9L/LL-L	**HANNAHS STORY (7)**	D Steele 5 9-9	**J Dace(5)**	29
3	(7)	262372-	**HEADSHOT (68)**	A Carroll 8 9-9	**Myla Coppins(7)**	59
4	(9)	7L8008/	**MUSAYTIR (558) (C)**	Joe Ponting 8 9-9	**G Mangan**	–
5	(6)	L6009-5	**PORFIN (7) (C&D)**	P McEntee 8 9-9	**Grace McEntee**	46
6	(4)	L/83006-	**SPIRIT CHARMER (114)**	P Chamings 5 9-9	**W Cox**	51
7	(3)	L07683-	**TILSWORTH MAX (19)**	J R Jenkins 6 9-9	**J Peate**	53
8	(2)	469549-	**VOODOO RAY (24) (D)**	G & J Moore 7 9-9	**T P Queally**	42
9	(8)	985L69-	**ZALTALLA (19) (C&D)**	M Attwater 5 9-9	**N Callan**	★60

BLINKERS: No. 8 CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 1, 5 HOOD: No. 6.

SP FORECAST: 6-4 Call Glory, 5-2 Headshot, 5 Tilsworth Max, 8 Zaltalla, 14 Spirit Charmer, Porfin, 20 Voodoo Ray, 33 Musaytir, 66 Hannahs Story.

2025: No corresponding race.

12.40 CLASSIFIED STAKES (DIV 2)
£3,454 (6) 7f 1yds (8)

1	(8)	7D89-21	● **SECRET ROAD (4) (F)**	James Owen 8 9-13	**P Cosgrave**	57
2	(6)	72L580-	**ALYARA (96)**	Joe Ponting 8 9-9	**D E Hogan**	34
3	(3)	6LL287-	**DR ALI (31)**	J R Jenkins 4 9-9	**J Peate**	59
4	(7)	70949-L	**INVINCIBLE STORM (7)**	E De Giles 4 9-9	**L Morris**	50
5	(4)	L7LU4-5	**MIRAFLORES (7)**	R Cook & J Bridger 4 9-9	**K O'Neill**	53
6	(5)	58457-9	**UNDER CURFEW (9) (C)**	A Carroll 10 9-9	**G Mangan**	56
7	(2)	222506-	**VALADERO (24)**	Brian Toomey 5 9-9	**S D Bowen**	★61
8	(1)	365415-	**VITALLINE (19) (C&D)**	Kieran Burke 8 9-9	**Josephine Gordon**	58

BLINKERS: No. 2 TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 5, 8 CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 5, 6, 8.

SP FORECAST: 8-11 Secret Road, 6 Valadero, Vitalline, 8 Dr Ali, 16 Miraflores, Under Curfew, 25 Alyara, 33 Invincible Storm.

2025: No corresponding race.

1.10 MAIDEN STAKES
£6,480 (3) 1m 2f (5)

1	(5)	6-	**IMPERIAL DECISION (39)**	Kieran Burke 4 10-2	**Josephine Gordon**	30
2	(2)	6-	**AL BOWLLY (24)**	R Hannon 3 8-8	**H Davies**	49
3	(4)	3-	**GENUINE WARRIOR (31)**	Harry Charlton 3 8-8	**C Shepherd**	59
4	(1)	07-	**KLAMMER EXPRESS (24)**	J Chapple-Hyam 3 8-8	**Sorin Moldoveanu(7)**	45
5	(3)	4-	● **SIAM RUBY (37)**	R Beckett 3 8-3	**E Greatrex**	★72

TONGUE STRAP: No. 1 CHEEK PIECES: No. 1.

SP FORECAST: 4-11 Siam Ruby, 5 Al Bowlly, 6 Genuine Warrior, 25 Klammer Express, 33 Imperial Decision.

2025: No corresponding race.

1.47 JOIN THE MIDNITE MOVEMENT HANDICAP
£4,397 (5) 1m 2f (10)

1	(5)	564517-	**DARK ROSA (33)**	G Nicholls 4 9-10	**R Hornby**	76
2	(1)	LL2016-	**WOODSTOCK CITY (38) (D)**	I Williams 6 9-10	**R Kavanagh(5)**	77
3	(10)	258119-	**ANNEXATION (19) (D)**	A Carroll 10 9-10	**Jack Doughty**	77
4	(7)	114434-	**MEET ME IN MERAKI (21) (D)**	P Evans 5 9-8	**P Cosgrave**	★82
5	(2)	326353-	**FLIGHTOFTHEPHOENIX (26) (F)**	C Hills 4 9-7	**B Sanderson**	79
6	(6)	5/11995-	**LENNY'S SPIRIT (26) (D)**	D P Quinn 8 9-7	**W Carson**	76
7	(9)	4445L-	**ALTA RICA (46)**	M Tregoning 4 9-7	**H Davies**	76
8	(3)	531854-	**DREAM PIRATE (23)**	T Kent 6 9-4	**G Wood**	80
9	(4)	L55988-	● **KING OF CHARM (26)**	Martin Dunne 5 9-3	**D Keenan**	76
10	(8)	315366-	**JOHNJAY (117)**	Kieran Burke 6 8-11	**Josephine Gordon**	79

BLINKERS: No. 8 TONGUE STRAP: No. 9 CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 2, 7.

SP FORECAST: 7-2 Dream Pirate, 4 Flightofthephoenix, 5 Meet Me In Meraki, 7 Johnjay, 8 Lenny's Spirit, Dark Rosa, 10 Woodstock City, 12 Others.

2025: No corresponding race.

TRACK FACTS: GOING: Standard. Left Handed. **TOP TRACK JOCKEY (2021-26):** Luke Morris 10% Strike rate. **TOP TRACK TRAINER (2021-26):** G & J Moore 15% Strike rate. **FIRST TIME:** 1.10 Imperial Decision (cheek pieces, tongue strap), 1.47 Alta Rica (cheek pieces), 3.00 The Thames Boatman (wind surgery), 3.38 Raintown (blinkers), Connie Moon (visor), 12.40 Miraflores (cheek pieces, tongue strap).

2.20 HANDICAP
£4,397 (5) 5f 6yds (8)

1	(6)	011413-	● **HINT OF HUMOUR (15) (C&D)**	A Carroll 4 9-9	**W Carson**	77
2	(4)	546858-	**FAUSTUS (38) (D)**	R Cook & J Bridger 8 9-7	**K O'Neill**	77
3	(5)	L7L69-4	**DIAMOND DREAMER (2) (C&D)**	P Chamings 6 9-6	**C Hutchinson**	78
4	(3)	515737-	**LEVEL UP (15) (C&D)**	P Evans 7 9-3	**R Kavanagh(5)**	75
5	(7)	L513L6-	**MICK'S SPIRIT (23) (C&D)**	C Allen 8 9-3	**D Keenan**	★80
6	(1)	25L8L-7	**MANHATTAN CHUTE (7)**	J & S Best 4 9-1	**S M Levey**	72
7	(8)	5661-81	**GOGO YUBARI (3) (C&D)**	A Carroll 5 8-13(5ex)	**H Vigors(7)**	79
8	(2)	LL7L75-	**DESDEMONA (19) (D)**	M Attwater 4 8-11	**L Morris**	74

BLINKERS: Nos. 3, 4, 6 VISOR: No. 5 TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 5, 8 CHEEK PIECES: No. 2.

SP FORECAST: 15-8 Gogo Yubari, 2 Hint Of Humour, 11-2 Diamond Dreamer, 10 Mick's Spirit, Faustus, 12 Level Up, 25 Desdemona, Manhattan Chute.

2025: No corresponding race.

3.00 HANDICAP
£9,631 (3) 5f 6yds (5)

1	(1)	541L11-	**BALDOMERO (10) (C&D)**	M Appleby 8 9-11	**H Davies**	97
2	(2)	86212-1	● **ACCRUAL (3) (C,D)**	D Loughnane 5 9-7(5ex)	**H Vigors(7)**	93
3	(3)	05893L-	**TWILIGHT JET (10) (D)**	J & S Best 7 9-3	**S M Levey**	★100
4	(4)	504252-	**THE THAMES BOATMAN (67) (C&D,F)**	R Hughes 6 9-0	**F Marsh**	99
5	(5)	661435-	**STAR CHORUS (13) (D)**	M Murphy 4 8-11	**R Hornby**	98

VISOR: No. 1 TONGUE STRAP: No. 5 EYE COVERS: No. 2 HOOD: Nos. 4, 5.

SP FORECAST: 6-4 Accrual, 5-2 Baldomero, 7-2 The Thames Boatman, 15-2 Star Chorus, 12 Twilight Jet.

2025: Michaela's Boy 5-9-3, Luke Morris 6-1 (R Cowell), drawn (1), 8 ran.

3.38 HANDICAP
£4,397 (5) 1m 4f (8)

1	(8)	62422-1	**CHARLIE'S CHOICE (7) (C&D,F)**	D M Simcock 6 10-2	**Taryn Langley(5)**	78
2	(7)	209664-	**WONDER (51)**	J Fanshawe 5 10-0	**J Peate**	78
3	(6)	312114-	**NAASMA (104) (C)**	P Phelan 7 9-13	**P Bradley**	77
4	(1)	L7361-1	● **TORTURED SOUL (7) (C&D)**	A Carroll 6 9-11	**J Doughty**	76
5	(2)	874201-	**DAMASCUS STEEL (12) (D)**	D P Quinn 6 9-9	**W Carson**	79
6	(5)	46U55-8	**RAINTOWN (7) (C&D)**	J S Moore 6 9-7	**Taylor Fisher(3)**	72
7	(3)	34L4L/2-	**BLUE UNIVERSE (J60)**	M Attwater 6 9-6	**L Morris**	★80
8	(4)	04/6538-	**CONNIE MOON (46)**	D Coakley 4 9-3	**R Hornby**	77

BLINKERS: No. 6 VISOR: Nos. 5, 8.

SP FORECAST: 15-8 Charlie's Choice, 3 Damascus Steel, 4 Tortured Soul, 6 Wonder, 10 Naasma, 16 Blue Universe, Connie Moon, 50 Raintown.

2025: No corresponding race.

BEATEN FAVOURITES: 1.47 Johnjay(hcp). 2.20 Hint Of Humour(hcp), Mick's Spirit(hcp). 3.00 The Thames Boatman(hcp). 3.38 Wonder(hcp). **DRAW:** Little effect. **LONGEST TRAVELLER: Accrual** (3.00) 195 miles. **STABLE SWITCH:** 12.10 **Musaytir** from G Harris to Joe Ponting. 1.47 **Johnjay** from R Teal to Kieran Burke.

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS & PRICES

EXETER:
Good to soft-soft in places

1.02—CALL ME LEGEND (Murray Dodd, 3-1 co fav) 1; Diamatiste (3-1 co fav) 2; Pipers Cross (7-1) 3. H'cap 7 ran. 1l, 4¼l. (P Hobbs & J White; 3-1 cofav Gillespie). Tote: £4.00; pl £2.20, £1.50. exacta: £13.70. tricast: £55.98. trifecta: £49.10. CSF: £12.63. Non-runners: Braganza Bay, Tzarmix.

1.32—JOHNNY'S JURY (G Sheehan, 6-4 fav) 1; Pourquoi Pas Papa (15-8 2nd fav) 2; Limerick Star (16-1) 3. 14 ran. 9½l, 2¼l. (J Snowden). Tote: £2.50; pl £1.20, £1.10, £2.90. exacta: £5.50. trifecta: £40.10. CSF: £4.99. Non-runners: Lirone Du Seuil, Lord Virginia.

2.02—SILVER THORN (B R Jones, 3-1 jt fav) 1; El Granjero (3-1 jt fav) 2; Saint Anapolino (11-2) 3. H'cap 6 ran. 2l, 9½l. (E Lavelle). Tote: £4.00; pl £2.40, £1.80. exacta: £14.10. tricast: £43.57. trifecta: £41.20. CSF: £12.49. Non-runners: Laganhill, Tommy The Tank.

2.32—FOLLOWCATO (K Woods, 17-2) 1; Denemethy (10-1) 2; Good Friday Fairy (18-5 fav) 3. H'cap 10 ran. 3¼l, 1¾l. (B Pauling). Tote: £9.50; pl £2.70, £3.40, £1.20. exacta: £67.00. tricast: £365.13. trifecta: £359.30. CSF: £89.89.

3.02—ROBBER'S BRIDGE (B J Powell, 10-1) 1; Shuil Ceoil (6-1) 2; Moorland Rambler (12-1) 3. H'cap 14 ran. 11l, 2¼l. (Dan Horsford; 9-2 cofav Storming Nelson, 9-2 cofav Olivia Kate, 9-2 cofav Locked Down Lad). Tote: £11.00; pl £3.00, £2.40, £4.10. exacta: £76.20. tricast: £757.57. trifecta: £831.80. CSF: £71.67. Non-runners: Directly, Getaway With You, It's A Breeze, Prairie Diamond.

3.35—BONZA BOY (L Williams, 8-1) 1; Royal Mer (15-2) 2; Risk De Pluie (10-3 2nd fav) 3. H'cap 11 ran. ¾l, 2½l. (J Scott; 2-1 fav Haas Boy). Tote: £9.00; pl £2.00, £2.10, £1.70. exacta: £59.60. tricast: £244.94. trifecta: £364.20. CSF: £67.58.

4.05—MORTAL COIL (J Bryan, 18-1) 1; Bold Step (10-1) 2; I'm Wide Awake (2-1 fav) 3. 11 ran. 2¾l, 8l. (T H Weston). Non-runners: Eastern Fire, Final Surprise, Le Cold Grey, Valiant Soldier.

Jackpot: Not won, pool of £1,668.28 carried over.

Placepot: £81.30

(Race 1) 3, 1; (2) 7, 16, 9; (3) 6, 4; (4) 7, 6, 5; (5) 3, 5, 2; (6) 8, 3, 1.

Quadpot: £29.20

NEWCASTLE: Standard

1.27—KING CHAOS (Kaiya Fraser, 7-4 fav) 1; Cardinal Point (2-1 2nd fav) 2; Clansman (25-1) 3. H'cap 8 ran. ½l, ½l. (R Menzies). Tote: £3.90; pl £1.30, £1.20, £4.10. exacta: £6.90. tricast: £55.33. trifecta: £55.00. CSF: £5.33. Non-runner: Natzor.

1.57—LEVEL LOOK (Jason Watson, 5-1) 1; Asia Force (8-13 fav) 2; New Bay Star (5-2 2nd fav) 3. 4 ran. 2¾l, 2½l. (A Balding). Tote: £6.00; exacta: £8.50. trifecta: £17.30. CSF: £8.86.

2.27—TRUST NO ONE (Taryn Langley, 6-4 fav) 1; Onyeisi (11-4 2nd fav) 2; Sunday Sinatra (6-1) 3. H'cap 6 ran. ½l, 1l. (Lemos Souza). Tote: £2.50; pl £1.10, £1.90. exacta: £7.50. trifecta: £28.10. CSF: £6.02.

2.57—ALBA GU BRATH (A Mullen, 4-9 fav) 1; Five Cay (14-1) 2; Viking Glory (9-4 2nd fav) 3. 5 ran. 2¾l, ½l. (C Johnston). Tote: £1.45; pl £1.10, £5.60. exacta: £6.30. trifecta: £7.60. CSF: £8.10.

3.30—MOSTAR DREAMS (O McSweeney, 5-1) 1; Great Mates (13-8 fav) 2; Donna Nook (5-1) 3. H'cap 6 ran. ½l, nk. (A Keatley). Tote: £7.90; pl £3.10, £1.20. exacta: £20.10. trifecta: £81.80. CSF: £13.62.

4.00—EAGLES WHISTLE (S Gray, 12-1) 1; Laurens Dream (11-2) 2; Rory (9-2 jt 2nd fav) 3. 12 ran. 1½l, nk. (D Bourke; 3-1 fav Bossy Parker). Tote: £17.90; pl £5.50, £1.70, £1.60. exacta: £124.50. trifecta: £1112.70. CSF: £79.53.

4.35—OKAMI (O McSweeney, 11-2 2nd fav) 1; Bishop's Glory (10-1) 2; Henery Hawk (9-1) 3. H'cap 10 ran. nk, nk. (P Midgley; 15-8 fav Little Mi Mi). Tote: £6.70; pl £2.10, £2.80, £2.50. exacta: £59.60. tricast: £379.62. trifecta: £344.70. CSF: £60.40.

Placepot: £75.40

(Race 1) 5, 4, 2; (2) 3; (3) 4, 1; (4) 1, 2; (5) 1, 3; (6) 2, 6, 9.

Quadpot: £5.90

WOLVERHAMPTON:
Abandoned due to Frozen Racecourse

DAILY EXPRESS

OFFICIAL HORSE RACING COMMENTARY AND RESULTS

Call 0905 817 2637

[illegible]

PETER NAUGHTON'S HORSE RACING TIPS

GLORIOUS, GLORIOUS GOODWOOD!

Qirat 150 - 1 WIN

CALL 0900 140 1005 FROM MIDDAY TODAY

Calls cost £1.50 per min plus your telephone access charge.
You must be 18+. Helpline: 0333 202 3390

RED HOT BOOKIE BASHER

SUPERB WINNERS MONTH AFTER MONTH

FROM MY WELL CONNECTED CONTACTS

BIG WINNING DAY > LINED UP TODAY

Call 0906 174 9390 Line updates at 10am and 4pm daily

Lines updated at 10am & 4pm daily. Calls will cost £1.50 per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke. Helpdesk 0333 202 3390.

THEKNOW
RACING SERVICE

LATEST WINNERS:

THE BLUESMAN
WON 5-6 (Southwell)

MORROPHORE
WON 5-4 (Lingfield)

UBATUBA
WON 6-5 (Leicester)

ONE EYE ON VEGAS
WON 15-8 (Leicester)

DUKES COMMAND
WON 3-1 (Lingfield)

DON'T MISS OUT!
Call
0906 174 2314
from 9am daily

Calls cost £1.50 per min plus your network access charge.
You must be 18+. Helpline: 0333 202 3390

Skelton tribute to unique Langer Dan

By **David Yates**

DAN SKELTON paid tribute to "a unique horse" as he announced the death of two-time Coral Cup hero Langer Dan.

The 10-year-old, successful under the trainer's brother Harry at the Cheltenham Festival in 2023 and 2024, was retired from racing last March after suffering a heart problem.

"He lived in his little farmyard with all his geese and his ducks, and unfortunately yesterday afternoon he died very peacefully – we lost him to the heart condition he was diagnosed with last year," said the trainer.

"He was a unique horse – a very, very special horse. He was tiny but he loved his racing and when he was on-song he was bloody good."

Owned by Colm Donlon, the son of Ocovango won six of his 27 races – he was beaten a nose and a short head in third behind Impaire Et Passe in the Grade One Aintree Hurdle in April 2024 – and amassed £281,952 in prize money. In addition to landing two Coral Cups, Langer Dan finished second to Galopin Des Champs in the Martin Pipe Conditional Jockeys' Handicap Hurdle in 2021 and was brought down behind Banbridge in the same race the following year.

"He captured the essence of the Festival and he might have won four times there," added Skelton.

"He was proof that horses don't have to win 10 Grade Ones to be super special and have a cult following."

DAN THE MAN: Langer Dan won two Coral Cups at the Festival

THE SCOUT

12.45	Mondoui'boy	2.55	Myretown
1.15	Le Galli Bier	3.32	Lord Snootie
1.52	Moon Rocket	4.02	Diamond Street
2.25	Best Women		

12.45 'NATIONAL HUNT' MAIDEN HURDLE

£5,281 (Class 4) 2m 3f (16 declared)

1	3-4	**A KING OF MAGIC (1)** P Nicholls 5 11-7	**Doubtful**	
2	P	**BLAZING GADEN (25)** D J Jeffreys 5 11-7	**F Lambert(3)**	–
3	9	**BLAZING SAINT (31)** Christian Williams 5 11-7	**J Tudor**	47
4	3-99	**COLLANISI (36)** B Pauling 6 11-7	**Beau Morgan(5)**	78
5	1-32	**GEE FORCE FLYER (52)** O Murphy 6 11-7	**S Bowen**	119
6	5-	**GEORGEMANI (286)** David Dennis 5 11-7	**C J Todd**	–
7	3-	**JOHNNY'S JURY (1) (F)** J Snowden 6 11-7	**G Sheehan**	★121
8	16-3L4	**KILWAUGHTER (36)** P Hobbs & J White 6 11-7	**Sean Houlihan**	110
9	2/2-6	● **MONDOUI'BOY (253)** B Pauling 6 11-7	**B J Powell**	–
10	3-45	**MY OWN LOVELY LEE (37)** P Hobbs & J White 6 11-7	**J Best**	104
11	12	**SHOTGUN RIDER (37)** N & W Twiston-Davies 5 11-7	**J Turner(5)**	109
12	1	**SO PROUD (245)** J & A O'Neill 5 11-7	**K Brogan**	–
13	936-52	**SUTHERLAND (39)** T Ellis 6 11-7	**J Andrews(3)**	110
14	57-53	**TAO ENKI (37)** A Ralph 6 11-7	**J J Burke**	108
15	8	**CIAO BELLISIMA (15)** Henry Oliver 6 11-0	**N Slatter(3)**	86
16	4-44	**YELD TO CALL (51)** Mrs J Williams 5 11-0	**C Gethings**	114

TONGUE STRAP: No. 11.

SP FORECAST: 7-2 Gee Force Flyer, 9-2 Johnny's Jury, 5 Mondoui'boy, 7 So Proud, 8 Sutherland, Kilwaughter, 10 Shotgun Rider, 14 Others.

2025: Meeting abandoned due to frozen course.

1.15 HANDICAP CHASE

£5,413 (4) 2m 4f (13) ITV4

1 316-348 **GOLD FOR ALEC (30)** 6 12 2 **B Poste** 66
Runs: 12 Wins: 2(S,GS) Places: 3 £19,543
Trainer: T Symonds Owner: Gun Dog Gin Limited

2 4LL-F42 **PEPE LE MOKO (24) (C&D)** 8 12 2 **C Gethings** 115
Runs: 19 Wins: 2(S,GS) Places: 4 £37,525
T: Mrs J Williams O: Mr Len Jakeman & Mrs Jane Williams

3 40/2-42 **MOON PHASES (53)** 7 12 0 **D R Fox** 113
Runs: 5 Places: 2 £4,395
T: L Russell & M Scudamore O: Mr G McGladery & Mr F Mcclung

4 PP-1L4F **ALWAYS BUSY (170) (C)** 8 11 13 **Mr John Joe Murphy-Knight(7)** 113
Runs: 24 Wins: 3(S,GS,G) Places: 4 £24,125
Trainer: Christian Williams Owner: Mr G A Moore

5 33/P-64 **JACK BLACK (42)** 7 11 11 **T Durrell** 86
Runs: 6 Places: 3 £4,872
Trainer: D Skelton Owner: Charles Dingwall And Neil Clyne

6 32L11U **ATREIDES (15) (D)** 8 11 6 **B Harris(3)** 112
Runs: 26 Wins: 2(S,GS) Places: 10 £26,176
Trainer: N Mulholland Owner: The Chancers Partnership

7 212-843 **RULE ME IN (48)** 7 11 6 **J Tudor** 99
Runs: 6 Wins: 1(GS) Places: 2 £8,563
Trainer: Christian Williams Owner: Sue Howell

8 LL6-P24 **CARRIGMOORNA ROWAN (38)** 9 11 6 **T Broughton(5)** 105
Runs: 16 Wins: 2(GS) Places: 4 £10,967
Trainer: R Potter Owner: Miss J Hosgood

9 0575-41 **A GREAT EXCUSE (28)** 6 11 6 **J Brace(5)** 110
Runs: 9 Wins: 1(GS) £3,864
Trainer: M Comley Owner: Mrs Linda Johnson

10 934L-72 **BANK ON FRANK (55)** 8 11 4 **Beau Morgan(5)** 112
Runs: 8 Places: 3 £2,570
Trainer: B Pauling Owner: The Ben Pauling Racing Club

11 223-522 ● **LE GALLI BIER (33)** 5 11 3 **C Quinn** 106
Runs: 9 Places: 6 £21,150
Trainer: G & J Moore Owner: Heart Of The South Racing 143

12 1222-44 **IDEALLKO (14) (C,D)** 8 10 13 **Isabel Williams** 114
Runs: 20 Wins: 5(S,GS) Places: 3 £33,158
Trainer: E Williams Owner: R J Gambarini Racing

13 32-3F25 **DJ PETE (13)** 8 10 13 **J Best** ★116
Runs: 12 Places: 4 £8,329
Trainer: S-J Davies Owner: Fiona Alderson

VISOR: No. 6 TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 6, 11 CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 2, 10.

SP FORECAST: 4 Moon Phases, 6 Rule Me In, Pepe Le Moko, 13-2 A Great Excuse, 15-2 Jack Black, 8 Bank On Frank, 10 Le Galli Bier, 12 Gold For Alec, Carrigmoorna Rowan, 14 Others.

GUIDE: MOON PHASES built on what he achieved as a novice/maiden hurdler when beaten a neck on his chase/handicap debut at Kelso (2m1f, sft) in November. The seven-year-old is open to a good deal of improvement stepping up in trip and makes plenty of appeal in his bid to go one better. **Pepe Le Moko** was beaten by the same margin at Ludlow (2m4f, gd-sft) last month and is likely to enter the reckoning. **A Great Excuse**'s win at Lingfield (2m, gd-sft) last time gives him every chance too.

1.52 NOVICES' CHASE (GRADE 2)

£42,712 (1) 3m (6) ITV4

1 1616-11 **WADE OUT (57)** 7 11 9 **S Bowen** 146
Runs: 10 Wins: 7(S,GS,G) Places: 1 £54,380
Trainer: O Murphy Owner: Ferguson, Mason, Hales & Done

2 1-1L212 **DOYEN QUEST (36) (C,D)** 8 11 7 **T Durrell** 150
Runs: 22 Wins: 8(S,GS,G) Places: 3 £133,735
Trainer: D Skelton Owner: Exors Of The Late Mr N W Lake

3 2141-13 **LAURENS BAY (36) (D,F)** 7 11 4 **J J Burke** 144
Runs: 9 Wins: 4(S,GS,G) Places: 3 £71,295
Trainer: J Snowden Owner: Happy Valley Partnership

4 122P-1L ● **MOON ROCKET (29) (D)** 6 11 4 **C Gethings** ★151
Runs: 9 Wins: 4(S,GS) Places: 2 £54,049
Trainer: K Bailey & M Nicholls Owner: Youneverknow

5 1/1L-14 **THE JUKEBOX KID (28)** 7 11 4 **D Bass** 144
Runs: 5 Wins: 3(GS) £26,063
Trainer: B Pauling Owner: The Sixsmiths Overlords

JACKPOT: www.totepoolliveinfo.com. INSPECTION: 8.00AM

6 121P-31 **HOLLYGROVE CHA CHA (23)** 6 10 11 **G Sheehan** 149
Runs: 9 Wins: 6(S,G) Places: 1 £78,392
Trainer: J Snowden Owner: Hot To Trot Jumping

SP FORECAST: 2 Wade Out, 5-2 Moon Rocket, 4 Doyen Quest, 15-2 The Jukebox Kid, Laurens Bay, 12 Hollygrove Cha Cha.

GUIDE: WADE OUT proved a difficult ride before staying on strongly under the excellent Sean Bowen at Cheltenham (3m1f, sft) in November. Besides his jumping not being particularly fluent, the step up in trip on that occasion brought out the best in him in the latter stages and Olly Murphy's gelding, who beat the smart Wendigo on his chasing bow at Worcester (2m4f, gd), is taken to maintain his unbeaten record over fences. **Doyen Quest** should be well suited by this track following his second behind Salver at Sandown (3m, gd-sft), while **Moon Rocket** and **The Jukebox Kid** head the remainder.

2.25 HANDICAP HURDLE

£10,562 (4) 2m (18) ITV4

1 33-P310 **OAKLEY (14)** 8 12 0 **E Collier(5)** 104
Runs: 12 Wins: 1(G) Places: 3 £7,929
Trainer: E Williams Owner: Mr R E R Williams

2 23077L **TIME INTERVAL (2) (C&D)** 8 11 13 **C Maggs(5)** 110
Runs: 14 Wins: 3(G) Places: 3 £24,433
Trainer: David Dennis Owner: Clan McNeil

3 43-5244 **UKANTANGO (169) (D)** 9 11 13 **R T Dunne** 111
Runs: 19 Wins: 3(GS,G) Places: 4 £42,275
Trainer: O Murphy Owner: Ladies In Racing 1

4 7223-11 **SOLDIER'S LEAP (44) (D)** 6 11 13 **J Andrews(3)** 106
Runs: 9 Wins: 2(S,GS) Places: 4 £11,127
Trainer: T Ellis Owner: Mrs I Hodge

5 47-5F **SEA WARRIOR (25)** 7 11 12 **B J Powell** 103
Runs: 4 £669
Trainer: J Tizzard Owner: The Sea Warrior Syndicate

6 52-4 **DR WAKSMAN (26)** 5 11 12 **S Bowen** 99
Runs: 3 Places: 1 £2,515
Trainer: C Gordon Owner: Mr John H W Finch

7 18-P355 **KNIGHT TEMPLAR (14) (D)** 5 11 12 **S Houlihan** 109
Runs: 7 Wins: 1(GS) £19,418
Trainer: R Stephens Owner: Mrs V James

8 71045L **TARA ITI (37) (D)** 8 11 11 **J Best** 106
Runs: 48 Wins: 8(GS,G) Places: 15 £72,436
Trainer: F Brennan Owner: Mr David Gibbons

9 52-1223 **THREE PIKES (116)** 6 11 10 **F Keighley(7)** 104
Runs: 6 Wins: 1(GS) Places: 4 £9,083
Trainer: Henry Oliver Owner: Mr Nick Shutts

10 12342/L **JIAIR MADRIK (32)** 7 11 10 **T Gillard** 71
Runs: 6 Wins: 1(G)
Trainer: D McCain Owner: Martin Cap & Darrell Williams

11 17-2125 **AT THE OCHE (47) (D)** 5 11 9 **J Turner(5)** 109
Runs: 6 Wins: 2(G) Places: 2 £13,313
Trainer: N & W Twiston-Davies Owner: Mr N A Twiston-Davies

12 43211/3 ● **BEST WOMEN (44)** 7 11 8 **J Hogan** 96
Runs: 18 Wins: 2(S) Places: 7 £63,967
Trainer: A Hales Owner: Mr D W Fox

13 32-1LP7 **MAPLE (19) (D)** 5 11 8 **J Hamilton** 110
Runs: 12 Wins: 1(G) Places: 4 £17,870
T: Ruth Jefferson O: R Whitelock, L Clemitson & R Jefferson

14 2-L2551 **KELIJOE (29)** 6 11 7 **C Hammond** ★112
Runs: 9 Wins: 2(S,GS) Places: 3 £14,365
Trainer: S Edmunds Owner: Mr D Hague

15 224-35P **SNAPIUS (20) (D)** 7 11 6 **A Chadwick(3)** 108
Runs: 21 Wins: 2(S) Places: 4 £19,540
Trainer: James Owen Owner: Mr Alan Herbert

16 3-24U9L **RUN AWAY JOE (21)** 6 11 5 **T Broughton(5)** 77
Runs: 6 Places: 2 £1,003
Trainer: F O'Brien Owner: Paddy Brennan Racing Syndicate Raj

17 0074-P **MEXICAN STAN (49)** 6 11 0 **Lee Edwards** 101
Runs: 5 £565
Trainer: A Ralph Owner: First Chance Racing

18 2431 **PREMIER (30) (D,F)** 4 11 0 **C Quinn** 102
Runs: 4 Wins: 1(G) Places: 2 £9,418
Trainer: W Greatrex Owner: Jim and Claire Limited

VISOR: Nos. 8, 15 TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 4, 12, 16, 17
CHEEK PIECES: No. 2 HOOD: Nos. 4, 12, 18.

SP FORECAST: 9-2 Soldier's Leap, 5 Kelijoe, 11-2 Premier, 15-2 Sea Warrior, 10 Three Pikes, Knight Templar, Dr Waksman, At The Oche, 14 Others.

GUIDE: SOLDIER'S LEAP had been running with credit at the back end of last season and has improved plenty this campaign with a brace of victories at Stratford (2m3f, gd-sft) and Uttoxeter (2m, sft). The six-year-old was raised 11lb after being notably impressive last time and it wouldn't be a surprise if he had more to come. **Kelijoe** bounced back to form at Doncaster (2m3f, gd-sft) last month and is capable of going close along with **Premier**, who scored at Taunton (2m, gd) and might not be done improving yet.

2.55 HANDICAP CHASE (PREMIER HCAP)

£56,950 (1) 3m 5f 54yds (9) ITV4

1 24/31P-2 **L'HOMME PRESSE (29)** 11 12 0 **C Deutsch** 164
Runs: 19 Wins: 9(S,GS,G) Places: 3 £546,821
T: V Williams O: Dfa Racing (pink,edwards & Sharman)

2 3P/111-2 **MR VANGO (35) (D,F)** 10 11 7 **J Tudor** ★165
Runs: 13 Wins: 6(S,GS) Places: 2 £243,378
Trainer: S Bradstock Owner: Cracker and Smodge Partnership

3 2441-10 **RESPLENDENT GREY (42) (D)** 8 11 4 **S Bowen** 159
Runs: 18 Wins: 7(S,GS,G) Places: 4 £198,805
Trainer: O Murphy Owner: Mrs R J Skan

4 PO/PP-PP **NASSALAM (55)** 9 10 11 **C Quinn** –
Runs: 25 Wins: 7(S,GS) Places: 3 £195,529
Trainer: G & J Moore Owner: John and Yvonne Stone

5 51F11-F ● **MYRETOWN (42)** 9 10 8 **D R Fox** 162
Runs: 12 Wins: 5(S,GS) Places: 1 £106,425
Trainer: L Russell & M Scudamore Owner: Wymer & Russell

WARWICK RACINGTV

6 522-932 **DESTROYTHEEVIDENCE (24) 8 10 2** **C Gethings** 163
Runs: 18 Wins: 4(GS,G) Places: 6 £67,224
Trainer: K Bailey & M Nicholls Owner: Mr P J Andrews

7 322-784 **JOYEUX MACHIN (28) 9 10 2** **Harry Atkins(7)** 162
Runs: 28 Wins: 4(G) Places: 5 £86,934
Trainer: D Skelton Owner: Utb Racing

8 69-3122 **TORN AND FRAYED (29) (C) 12 10 2** **Doubtful**
Runs: 32 Wins: 5(S,GS,G) Places: 7 £155,544
T: N & W Twiston-Davies Owner: Mrs Caroline Beresford-Wylie

9 3/112-L3 **VAL DANCER (35) 9 10 2** **C Hammond** 157
Runs: 19 Wins: 6(S,GS) Places: 4 £164,062
Trainer: Mrs M Rowley Owner: The Val Dancers

BLINKERS: No. 4 VISOR: No. 6 TONGUE STRAP: No. 2
CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 2, 3, 7, 9.

SP FORECAST: 11-4 Myretown, 10-3 Mr Vango, 4 L'Homme Presse, 11-2 Resplendent Grey, 8 Val Dancer, 12 Destroytheevidence, Joyeux Machin, 20 Nassalam.

GUIDE: MYRETOWN only got as far as the ninth when falling as favourite in the Coral Gold Cup at Newbury (3m2f, gd-sft) on his return in November. However, he looked a potentially high-class chaser when winning the Ultima at the Cheltenham Festival (3m1f, gd-sft) last season and he can be given another chance here. **Mr Vango** is an obvious threat following his Becher Chase second at Aintree (3m2f, sft), although he may not be as well handicapped as the selection. Others to note are **L'Homme Presse** and **Resplendent Grey**.

3.32 PERTEMPS NETWORK HCAP HDL

£15,609 (2) 3m 1f 5yds (11) ITV4

1 8337-F5 **BOTOX HAS (15)** 10 12 0 **Mr J Fernandes(10)** 137
Runs: 31 Wins: 7(S,GS,G) Places: 5 £282,167
Trainer: G & J Moore Owner: John and Yvonne Stone

2 3212-13 **LUD'OR (42)** 6 11 9 **C Quinn** ★148
Runs: 9 Wins: 2(S) Places: 5 £42,457
Trainer: T Symonds Owner: The Ludorums

3 7/631L-0 **RED RISK (49)** 11 11 8 **F Keighley(7)** 141
Runs: 34 Wins: 6(S,GS,G) Places: 6 £214,647
T: P Nicholls O: Middleham Park Racing Xliv & A&J Ryan

4 41-3449 **LONG DRAW (29)** 7 11 6 **S Bowen** 143
Runs: 17 Wins: 3(GS,G) Places: 8 £63,316
Trainer: O Murphy Owner: Mr Alan Peterson

5 96154/P **GREEN BOOK (35)** 9 11 3 **C Deutsch** –
Runs: 14 Wins: 4(S,GS) Places: 2 £144,075
Trainer: V WilliamsOwner: Lady Price, C Shaw, C Boylan & I Tagg

6 7227/3P **DOUGHMORE BAY (28)** 8 10 12 **J J Burke** 134
Runs: 9 Wins: 1(G) Places: 3 £25,624
Trainer: E Lavelle Owner: Mighty Acorn Stables

7 2P2/8L-L ● **LORD SNOOTIE (22) (C)** 9 10 7 **J Tudor** 114
Runs: 16 Wins: 2(S) Places: 3 £48,117
Trainer: Christian Williams Owner: Lord Snootie and his pals

8 P21626 **TRANQUIL SEA (29)** 6 10 7 **T Durrell** 147
Runs: 19 Wins: 2(G) Places: 7 £33,952
Trainer: D Skelton Owner: Mr Leigh Taylor

9 LD14-LL **FELICIE DU MAQUIS (35) (C)** 11 10 5 **Miss Clara Brewitt(7)** 146
Runs: 16 Wins: 5(S) Places: 3 £21,531
Trainer: C Boultbee-Brooks Owner: C & C Boultbee Brooks

10 11L-047 **RUBBER BALL (15)** 6 10 5 **B J Powell** 143
Runs: 10 Wins: 3(S,GS) Places: 1 £17,246
Trainer: N King Owner: Peter Beadles

11 136-23F **SPIKE JONES (9) (D)** 9 10 2 **B Macey(7)** 144
Runs: 22 Wins: 5(S,GS,G) Places: 6 £49,181
T: S Drinkwater O: Drinkwater Family & Cheltenham Boys

BLINKERS: No. 1 TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 8, 9, 11 CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 3, 8, 11.

SP FORECAST: 3 Lud'or, 4 Long Draw, 5 Tranquil Sea, 15-2 Lord Snootie, 10 Botox Has, Rubber Ball, 12 Spike Jones, Red Risk, 14 Others.

GUIDE: With many of these having questions to answer, preference is for **LUD'OR**. The six-year-old does have to prove that he stays this far, but his latest third at Newbury (2m5f, sft) was very encouraging and he may even improve for the step up in trip. On the pick of his form, **Long Draw** would be put forward as the main danger, but his Cheltenham (3m, gd-sft) effort last time was very poor. **Spike Jones** is one to note for those looking for an each-way alternative.

4.02 OPEN NH FLAT RACE

£2,178 (5) 2m (10)

1		**ALL GOOD TO GO** A Hales 5 11-4	**J Hogan**	–
2		**ARIZONA MOON** S Edmunds 5 11-4	**C Hammond**	–
3		**COUNTRY PURSUITS** I Williams 5 11-4	**R T Dunne**	–
4	F-5	**CURRENT EDITION (30)** N & W Twiston-Davies 5 11-4	**J Brace(5)**	100
5		● **DIAMOND STREET** D Skelton 5 11-4	**T Durrell**	–
6	1	**LOCH NESS PINEAU (76)** B Pauling 5 11-4	**Beau Morgan(5)**	–
7	21	**MCELHATTAN (48)** D McCain 5 11-4	**T Gillard**	–
8	4	**SASSELLA STORM (30)** J Boyle 5 11-4	**D Johnston**	★102
9	1	**BRITWAY BELLE (90)** Henry Oliver 5 10-11	**N Fox(5)**	–
10		**SCAREDOFNOTHING** T H Weston 4 10-5	**J Bryan**	–

TONGUE STRAP: No. 2.

SP FORECAST: 3 Loch Ness Pineau, 4 Diamond Street, 9-2 Current Edition, 6 Sassella Storm, 7 Britway Belle, 12 Mcelhattan, 14 Country Pursuits, 16 All Good To Go, Arizona Moon, 20 Scaredofnothing.

TRACK FACTS: GOING: Soft. Left Handed. **TOP TRACK JOCKEY (2021-26):** Jonathan Burke 20% Strike rate. **TOP TRACK TRAINER (2021-26):** D Skelton 22% Strike rate. **FIRST TIME:** 1.15 Bank On Frank (cheek pieces), 2.25 Mexican Stan (tongue strap), Run Away Joe (tongue strap), 2.55 Destroytheevidence (visor), Nassalam (wind surgery), 3.32 Felicie Du Maquis (wind surgery), 4.02 Sassella Storm (wind surgery), Arizona Moon (tongue strap), 12.45 Yeld To Call (wind surgery). **BEATEN FAVOURITES:** 12.45 Gee Force Flyer. 1.15 Moon Phases(hcp ch), Rule Me In(hcp ch). 1.52 Moon Rocket, The Jukebox Kid(hcp ch). 2.25 At The Oche(hcp hdl), Three Pikes. 2.55 Mr Vango(hcp ch), Myretown(hcp ch). 3.32 Lud'or(hcp hdl). **LONGEST TRAVELLER: Moon Phases** (1.15) & **Myretown** (2.55) 360 miles. **STABLE SWITCH:** 12.45 **Georgemani** from Oliver Bowd to David Dennis, **Mondoui'boy** from Harry Derham to B Pauling, **So Proud** from D Cantillon to J & A O'Neill. 4.02 **Britway Belle** from D P Murphy in Ireland to Henry Oliver, **Loch Ness Pineau** from M Goff in Ireland to B Pauling, **Mcelhattan** from Mark J Scallan to D McCain.

William HILL
HALF A MILL
WARWICK CLASSIC CHASE
THE JOCKEY CLUB
Free Bet
£5 free racing bet
When you stake £10+ on any race at Warwick
In-shop Exclusive
TAKE TIME TO THINK™
taketimetothink.co.uk
18+
GambleAware Advice | Tools | Support

In-shop only. Valid 10/01/2026 (until all Free Bet vouchers have been issued). Max 10k Free Bets available estate wide. Place £10+ cash bet on any Warwick race at odds 2/1+ via SSBT/Smart Hub for a chance to get: £5 Free Bet (to use on any horse racing market via SSBT/Smart Hub, valid the following day after qualifying bet is placed during shop opening, must be used in one full stake). One per customer. See shop colleague for T&Cs.

KEMPTON RTV (8AM INSP.)

12.20 NOVICES' HURDLE
£8,169 (Class 3) 2m (8 declared)

1 12-11L **SHABALKO D'HERM (35) (D)** N & W Twiston-Davies 6 11-10
S Twiston-Davies 120
2 8/13-121 ● **BARON NOIR (32) (D)** A King 6 11-6...**T Bellamy★130**
3 3F23-15 **KOCKTAIL BLEU (42)** C Gordon 6 11-6...**F Gordon 122**
4 2/144-F1 **SWINGIN SAFARI (25)** P Nicholls 6 11-6...**H Cobden 124**
5 S4-L09 **CAN U FEEL IT (24)** Christian Williams 5 11-0
T McCain-Mitchell(5) 106
6 **GAMBINO (F150)** D Skelton 5 11-0...**H Skelton –**
7 L-65F **MY FORTUNE (24)** B Pauling 6 11-0...**B R Jones 85**
8 942-LL **THE EGYPTIAN GINGE (49)** N & W Twiston-Davies 5 11-0
Mr J Neild(7) 128

HOOD: Nos. 5, 8.

SP FORECAST: 9-4 Baron Noir, 3 Swingin Safari, 4 Gambino, 6 The Egyptian Ginge, 15-2 Kocktail Bleu, 8 Shabalko D'herm, 33 Can U Feel It, 66 My Fortune.
2025: Meeting abandoned due to Frozen Track.

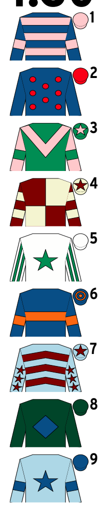
12.55 HANDICAP CHASE
£11,618 (3) 2m 4f 110yds (6)

1 112/95-L **OUTLAW PETER (65) (C&D)** P Nicholls 10 12-0...**F Gingell 131**
2 111P-12 **GO WEST (28) (D)** P Nicholls 8 11-12...**H Cobden 140**
3 35/13-33 **LOOKAWAY (24)** N King 9 11-12...**J Quinlan 139**
4 51136-2 **LEADER IN THE PARK (42) (C&D)** B Pauling 8 11-9...**B R Jones 139**
5 L132-31 **OLD COWBOY (12)** G & J Moore 6 11-3...**F Mitchell(3) ★141**
6 3/412-4 ● **PESO (24)** J & A O'Neill 7 11-1...**Jonjo O'Neill Jr 134**

TONGUE STRAP: No. 1.

SP FORECAST: 5-2 Leader In The Park, 3 Lookaway, 7-2 Go West, 4 Old Cowboy, 8 Peso, 14 Outlaw Peter.

1.30 JUVENILE HURDLE 4YO
£8,169 (3) 2m (9) ITV4



1 2-12 ● **PRECIOUS MAN (56)** 11 10...**H Skelton★129**
Runs: 3 Wins: 1(S) Places: 2 £50,502
Trainer: D Skelton Owner: Mrs Johnny de la Hey
2 6 **CHARTWELL JOCK (14)** 11 0...**D Sansom(3) 86**
Runs: 1 £447
Trainer: Seamus Mullins Owner: Mr S Smode
3 31 **DISSIDENT (29)** 11 0...**C O'Farrell 112**
Runs: 2 Wins: 1(GS) Places: 1 £5,322
T: G & J Moore O: Mr Ben Haynes And Mrs Samantha Dunn
4 3 **FRANK STAMPER (25)** 11 0...**J Bowen 86**
Runs: 1 Places: 1 £1,003
Trainer: W Greatrex Owner: Jim and Claire Limited
5 5 **KING AL (36)** 11 0...**T Bellamy 121**
Runs: 1 £598
Trainer: A King Owner: Apple Tree Stud
6 22 **POURQUOI PAS PAPA (1)** 11 0...**Doubtful**
Runs: 3 Places: 3 £14,247
Trainer: P Nicholls Owner: Bell, Lyons, James, Hill
7 **SENATOR (F199)** 11 0...**J A Anderson(3) –**
Trainer: J Snowden Owner: Mr Thomas Mold & Mr Luke Wilson
8 1 **WERTPOL (11) (D)** 11 0...**Paul O'Brien 116**
Runs: 1 Wins: 1(G) £4,955
Trainer: Harry Derham Owner: Heart Of The South Racing 145
9 **WISE COUNSELLOR (F114)** 11 0...**J Quinlan –**
Trainer: D Steele Owner: Sam Tingey & Charlie Tingey

BLINKERS: No. 3 TONGUE STRAP: No. 1 HOOD: No. 4.

SP FORECAST: 1-2 Precious Man, 10 King Al, Wertpol, Dissident, 20 Senator, 25 Frank Stamper, 100 Wise Counsellor, Chartwell Jock.

GUIDE: This should be an ideal opportunity for **PRECIOUS MAN** to get back to winning ways. A winner at Auteuil (2m2f, sft), the son of Almanzor shaped with plenty of promise on his first appearance for Dan Skelton when runner-up at Cheltenham (2m, hvy) and is expected to be too strong for the opposition, despite giving away 10lb to the field. **Wertpol** scored at Taunton (2m, gd) on his hurdling/stable bow for Harry Derham and commands respect along with **Senator**, who shaped well in a couple of starts on the Flat in France.

GOSSIP FROM THE GALLOPS

South: DANDY KHAN (11.40 Lingfield)
Newmarket: SECRET ROAD (12.40 Lingfield)
Scotland: SECOND FIDDLE (3.47 Newcastle)
North: INSPIRED (5.20 Newcastle)

THE SCOUT

12.20 Baron Noir
12.55 Peso
1.30 Precious Man
2.05 The Doyen Chief
2.40 Kalif Du Berlais
3.17 Lanesborough
3.53 Quaviste

2.05 HANDICAP CHASE
£18,210 (2) 3m (6) ITV4

1 L1629-U **SOUL ICON (63) (C)** 9 12 0...**S Twiston-Davies★145**
Runs: 30 Wins: 9(GS,G) Places: 7 £187,082
Trainer: Kieran Burke Owner: This Time Next Year Maybe
2 P91P/1-L **YOUR DARLING (50)** 11 11 9...**B R Jones 129**
Runs: 18 Wins: 6(S,GS,G) Places: 2 £75,785
Trainer: B Pauling Owner: Lord Vestey
3 211-2P5 ● **THE DOYEN CHIEF (29) (C&D)** 9 11 9...**T Bellamy 144**
Runs: 15 Wins: 6(S,GS,G) Places: 3 £67,593
Trainer: A King Owner: Masterson Holdings Limited
4 8/4L2-61 **WELCOM TO CARTRIES (36) (D)** 8 11 5...**H Cobden 143**
Runs: 10 Wins: 3(GS) Places: 3 £46,652
Trainer: P Nicholls Owner: Mrs Johnny de la Hey
5 P1L-3PP **BEACHCOMBER (14) (C&D)** 8 11 5...**J O'Neill Jr 139**
Runs: 18 Wins: 4(GS,G) Places: 3 £63,202
Trainer: J & A O'Neill Owner: Mrs E J Wills
6 6321-1L **SEA INVASION (37)** 8 10 2...**B Godfrey 141**
Runs: 15 Wins: 3(G) Places: 5 £45,327
Trainer: A Honeyball Owner: Mr Richard & Mrs Carol Cheshire

BLINKERS: Nos. 5, 6 TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 1, 4, 6.

SP FORECAST: 7-4 Welcom To Cartries, 3 Soul Icon, The Doyen Chief, 8 Your Darling, 10 Sea Invasion, 14 Beachcomber.

GUIDE: Welcom To Cartries left behind a disappointing return to action when winning at Sandown (3m, gd-sft) last month but more will be required off a 4lb higher mark. With that in mind, the vote goes to **THE DOYEN CHIEF**. A winner over C&D (gd) last March, the form of his Bangor (3m, sft) second received a boost with the winner landing a valuable handicap at Ascot just before Christmas. **Soul Icon** won the Desert Orchid (2m, gd-sft) here in 2024 and would be a major threat if seeing out the trip.

2.40 SILVINIACO CONTI CHASE (GDE 2)
£45,560 (1) 2m 4f 110yds (4) ITV4

1 156-2LL **MASTER CHEWY (15) (C)** 9 11 8...**S Twiston-Davies 163**
Runs: 26 Wins: 3(S,GS) Places: 9 £189,827
T: N & W Twiston-Davies O: Anne-marie & Jamie Shepperd
2 L245-4L **BOOMBAWN (34) (D)** 9 11 5...**H Skelton 164**
Runs: 27 Wins: 7(GS,G) Places: 7 £201,372
Trainer: D Skelton Owner: Bullen-smith & Faulks
3 F11L1-4 ● **KALIF DU BERLAIS (64)** 6 11 5...**H Cobden 163**
Runs: 10 Wins: 6(S,GS,G) £197,290
T: P Nicholls O: Ferguson, Mason, Hales, Done & Hogarth
4 23L4-L2 **EDWARDSTONE (34) (C)** 12 11 2...**T Cannon★168**
Runs: 38 Wins: 10(S,GS,G) Places: 9 £662,733
Trainer: A King Owner: Robert Abrey & Ian Thurtle

SP FORECAST: 8-11 Kalif Du Berlais, 7-2 Edwardstone, 11-2 Boombawn, 6 Master Chewy.

GUIDE: Kalif Du Berlais was very disappointing on his return to action in the Haldon Gold Cup at Exeter (2m2f, gd) and is presented with what appears to be a suitable opportunity to bounce back. That said, a chance is taken on **MASTER CHEWY**. Outclassed in the King George (3m, gd), the nine-year-old turns out on his second start following a wind operation and this might be the time to catch him, despite his penalty. **Edwardstone** and **Boombawn** are both more than capable of being in the mix.

TRACK FACTS: GOING: Good. Right Handed. **TOP TRACK JOCKEY (2021-26):** Harry Cobden 18% Strike rate. **TOP TRACK TRAINER (2021-26):** N Henderson 23% Strike rate. **FIRST TIME:** 1.30 Frank Stamper (hood), Precious Man (wind surgery). **BEATEN FAVOURITES:** 12.55 Outlaw Peter(hcp ch). 1.30 Precious Man. 2.05 Soul Icon(hcp ch). 2.40 Kalif Du Berlais(hcp ch). 3.17 Captain Teague, Just Ennemi. 3.53 Oakley's Way(hcp hdl). **LONGEST TRAVELLER: King Of The Lake** (3.17) & **Came From Nowhere** (3.17) 161 miles. **STABLE SWITCH:** 12.20 **Gambino** from N Meade in Ireland to D Skelton. 1.30 **Senator** from A Couetil in France to J Snowden, **Wise Counsellor** from A Balding to D Steele.

HOOF PRINTS

❑ ITV action at Kempton Park and Warwick remains under threat from the frost, with both cards subject to 8am inspections. Fairyhouse will check conditions at 7.30am. While there are no problems anticipated on the all-weather at Lingfield and Newcastle, the Friday Night Live at Wolverhampton fell to snow. Tomorrow's NH racing at Kelso has also fallen victim to the cold, with the BHA putting on an additional programme at Chelmsford City. Fontwell's card must pass a 9am inspection.

3.17 CORAL LANZAROTE HCAP HURDLE
£52,030 (2) 2m 5f (17) ITV4

1 141-F11 **FRENCH SHIP (42) (D)** 6 12 0...**C Pritchard(3) 146**
Runs: 10 Wins: 5(S,GS,G) Places: 2 £54,350
Trainer: P Hobbs & J White Owner: Wayne Clifford & Ian Gosden
2 1210/14- **CAPTAIN TEAGUE (407) (D)** 8 11 7...**Doubtful**
Runs: 9 Wins: 5(S,GS,G) Places: 2 £124,832
Trainer: P Nicholls Owner: Mrs Johnny de la Hey
3 33-3UFU **DOUBLE POWERFUL (9) (D)** 7 11 4...**C O'Farrell 143**
Runs: 19 Wins: 6(S,G) Places: 5 £50,332
Trainer: N Mulholland Owner: Equi ex Incertis Partners
4 F40-L99 **IBERICO LORD (29)** 8 11 4...**J Bowen 132**
Runs: 16 Wins: 5(S,GS) Places: 1 £195,318
Trainer: N Henderson Owner: Mr John P McManus
5 2754-53 **BEAT THE BAT (36)** 8 11 2...**B Carver 148**
Runs: 12 Wins: 2(GS,G) Places: 5 £42,597
Trainer: H Fry Owner: Twelfth Man Partnership 6
6 57221-1 ● **LANESBOROUGH (28)** 7 10 12...**B R Jones 145**
Runs: 9 Wins: 2(S,GS) Places: 4 £35,361
Trainer: B Pauling Owner: Easy Going Racing
7 12620-7 **WRECKLESS ERIC (21)** 6 10 10...**K Woods 147**
Runs: 10 Wins: 3(S,G) Places: 3 £53,523
Trainer: J & A O'Neill Owner: The Megsons
8 111-341 **KING OF THE LAKE (14) (D)** 8 10 10...**C Bament(7) 145**
Runs: 17 Wins: 4(S,GS,G) Places: 5 £48,651
Trainer: J Scott Owner: Lake Side Racing
9 54-2052 **IKE SPORT (15)** 8 10 9...**S Twiston-Davies★149**
Runs: 28 Wins: 4(GS,G) Places: 9 £98,697
Trainer: N Mulholland Owner: The Chosen Few
10 331-637 **KRAK (15)** 6 10 7...**J J Slevin 146**
Runs: 7 Wins: 1(S) Places: 3 £29,067
T: N & W Twiston-Davies O: Mr Simon Munir & Mr Isaac Souede
11 014L12 **GOODWIN (22) (D)** 8 10 7...**R Corcoran(7) 146**
Runs: 15 Wins: 5(GS,G) Places: 4 £51,912
Trainer: C Gordon Owner: Goodwin Racing Ltd
12 25-1211 **A PAI DE NOM (37) (D)** 6 10 6...**H Skelton 146**
Runs: 6 Wins: 3(S,GS) Places: 2 £26,353
T: D Skelton O: Cherry Knoll Farm, M Ward & D Skelton
13 16/1-L **JUST ENNEMI (38)** 6 10 6...**Paul O'Brien –**
Runs: 4 Wins: 2(S) £31,166
Trainer: Harry Derham Owner: Just Ennemi Partnership
14 1/33-321 **CAME FROM NOWHERE (21)** 7 10 6...**L Williams 145**
Runs: 6 Wins: 2(S) Places: 4 £21,363
Trainer: J Scott Owner: On A Mission
15 23-5511 **FASOL (9)** 7 10 5...**Miss Olive Nicholls(5) 146**
Runs: 13 Wins: 3(GS,G) Places: 5 £54,845
Trainer: P Nicholls Owner: Mr P J Vogt And Mr Bryan Drew
16 435F-71 **YELLOW STAR (30) (D)** 6 10 3...**F Mitchell(3) 145**
Runs: 11 Wins: 2(S,GS) Places: 1 £22,573
Trainer: G & J Moore Owner: Mr Tim Lord Kc And Mr G L Moore
17 1/1P-5 **JUST A ROSE (30)** 7 10 3...**F Gingell 146**
Runs: 4 Wins: 2(GS) £5,404
T: P Nicholls O: Mrs Jennifer Irish, Kate & Andrew Broo

VISOR: No. 11 TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 8, 14, 15 CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 15, 16 HOOD: Nos. 3, 9.

SP FORECAST: 4 Lanesborough, 9-2 A Pai De Nom, 11-2 French Ship, 15-2 Beat The Bat, 10 Came From Nowhere, Just Ennemi, 12 Fasol, 14 Others.

GUIDE: FRENCH SHIP had some smart form as a novice hurdler, most notably when fourth to The New Lion at Newbury (2m5f, gd-sft). The six-year-old made amends for an unlucky fall in the Silver Trophy (2m3f, gd) with impressive displays at Cheltenham (2m4f, gd-sft) and especially at Newbury (2m5f, sft) under a confident Harry Cobden. A 10lb rise is negated slightly by Callum Pritchard's 3lb claim and he may well have further improvement to come. **A Pai De Nom** qualified for this when scoring at Leicester (2m, sft) and he enters calculations along with easy Doncaster (2m1f, gd-sft) winner **Lanesborough** and **Beat The Bat**.

3.53 HANDICAP HURDLE
£9,506 (3) 2m (8)

1 8-LL321 **WILLIETHEBUILDER (14) (C&D)** Christian Williams 7 12-2
T McCain-Mitchell(5) 128
2 2LF-24P **RARE EDITION (21) (C&D)** C Longsdon 9 11-13...**D McConville(7) –**
3 L0-1L7L **WASHINGTON (14) (D)** Harry Derham 10 11-13...**M Fox(7) ★132**
4 P187-01 **WE'RE RED AND BLUE (34) (D)** J & A O'Neill 6 11-6
Jonjo O'Neill Jr 129
5 601-4P0 **KING WILLIAM RUFUS (22) (D)** C Gordon 9 11-5...**F Gordon 130**
6 10-8U2 ● **QUAVISTE (15)** D Skelton 6 10-11...**H Skelton 131**
7 21-152 **COURAGEOUS STRIKE (29) (D)** P Nicholls 5 10-11...**H Cobden 129**
8 44-2613 **OAKLEY'S WAY (25)** A Honeyball 6 10-2...**B Godfrey 128**

TONGUE STRAP: No. 8 CHEEK PIECES: No. 2 HOOD: No. 7.

SP FORECAST: 11-4 We're Red And Blue, 3 Williethebuilder, 9-2 Quaviste, 6 Rare Edition, 7 Oakley's Way, 8 Courageous Strike, 14 King William Rufus, 33 Washington.

THE SCOUT

3.10 Storm Asset
3.47 ELIGIBLE (nap)
4.20 Relevant Range
4.50 Pink Socks
5.20 INSPIRED (nb)
5.50 Goldmoyne
6.20 King Of Chaos
6.50 Yorkshire Glory
7.20 Asadjumeirah

3.10 AMATEUR JOCKEYS' HANDICAP
£3,576 (Class 6) 1m 2f 42yds (10 declared)

1 (10) 557- **HE'S OUR CRACKER (84)** J Candlish 4 11-2...**Mr F Robson(7) 43**
2 (2) 452017- **HACKNEY DIAMONDS (15) (T)** I Williams 4 11-1
Mr Jack Lander(5) 44
3 (9) 8/9746-4**TIME TURNER (8)** E Bethell 4 11-1...**Mr Simon Walker ★50**
4 (1) 79/L60L- **QUINTUS ARRIUS (J147) (C)** P Niven 6 11-0...**Mr J Brown(5) 46**
5 (8) 247490- **STAR CAST (21)** G Tutty 4 10-12...**Miss Amy Collier 47**
6 (7) 9L83L8- **WOODSHAW (66)** I Jardine 4 10-10...**Miss H Crawford(5) 44**
7 (5) 355355- **ALPINE SIERRA (12) (C&D)** J Goldie 8 10-10...**Mr E Cagney 47**
8 (3) L4L040- **SIR MAXI (23) (C)** S England 8 10-6...**Rebecca Hitchen(5) 48**
9 (6) /44237- ● **STORM ASSET (65) (C,D)** M Hammond 7 10-4
Miss Becky Smith 49
10 (4) 56L870- **BUSBY (13)** P Kirby 11 10-3...**N Cookson(5) 46**

VISOR: Nos. 3, 10 CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 2, 4, 6, 8.

SP FORECAST: 3 Alpine Sierra, 7-2 Time Turner, 4 Hackney Diamonds, 8 Storm Asset, He's Our Cracker, 10 Sir Maxi, 12 Star Cast, 14 Busby, 20 Others.

3.47 HANDICAP
£4,397 (5) 1m 5yds (11)

1 (5) 409361- ● **ELIGIBLE (13) (C,D)** M & D Easterby 10 9-13...**J Mason 76**
2 (4) 052- **MAO SHANG WONG (25)** D O'Meara 4 9-9...**D Nolan 78**
3 (7) 3/1L066- **FAR AHEAD (22)** R Fahey 4 9-9...**J Garritty 79**
4 (9) 111131- **SECOND FIDDLE (12) (C&D,F)** I Jardine 7 9-9...**M Tabti(5) 77**
5 (8) 725552- **MAUI BREEZE (12)** W Storey 4 9-7...**Paula Muir(3) 79**
6 (11) 7L3677- **STARLINER (12) (C)** Miss L Perratt 5 9-7...**Kaiya Fraser 79**
7 (1) 44646- **THE ENGLISH ROGUE (29)** E Bethell 4 9-7...**Jason Watson 76**
8 (10) 137035- **JUST TYPICAL (21) (C&D) (T)** I Williams 5 9-6...**B Loughnane 79**
9 (6) 8L27L5- **SEA LEGEND (21) (C)** J Goldie 6 9-5...**P Mulrennan ★82**
10 (2) 572321- **TASEVER (22) (C&D)** P Morris 6 9-3...**J Hart 81**
11 (3) 406030- **BOOK OF LIFE (14)** P Morris 6 8-13...**JP Sullivan 80**

TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 4, 8 CHEEK PIECES: No. 10 HOOD: Nos. 8, 9.

SP FORECAST: 3 Tasever, 9-2 Second Fiddle, 6 Eligible, 13-2 Mao Shang Wong, 7 Just Typical, 10 Maui Breeze, 12 Starliner, The English Rogue, 14 Others.

4.20 CLASSIFIED STAKES (DIV 1)
£4,711 (6) 1m 5yds (11)

1 (6) 448879- **ANNALEE LASS (25) (C&D)** P Niven 6 9-9...**D Nolan 48**
2 (10) 3L44L-9 **BARNEY'S BAY (7)** D Shaw 8 9-9...**C Hardie 48**
3 (5) 88355-4 **CATHERINE CHROI (4) (C)** I Jardine 8 9-9...**M Tabti(5) 55**
4 (3) 363444- **CROWNTHORPE (21) (C&D)** A Brown 11 9-9...**S B Kirrane 58**
5 (2) 553966- **EAGLES WHISTLE (112)** D Bourke 6 9-9...**J Hart 47**
6 (9) 687099- **GALILEO'S COMPASS (21) (D)** S Waugh 6 9-9...**A Waugh(3) 51**
7 (4) LL3308- **MISS RAINCLOUD (22)** T Waggott 4 9-9...**B McHugh 55**
8 (8) 342L87- **ONE MORE BOTTLE (25) (D)** L Quinlan 5 9-9...**P Mulrennan 62**
9 (7) 90398-2 ● **RELEVANT RANGE (6) (D)** I Furtado 7 9-9...**J Nason(3) ★63**
10 (1) 43738-3 **WHERES THE CRUMPET (6) (C&D,F)** D Thompson 8 9-9
A Brookes(3) 58
11 (11) /07654- **YORKSTONE (296) (D)** M & D Easterby 6 9-9...**J Mason 55**

BLINKERS: Nos. 3, 6, 8 VISOR: No. 2 TONGUE STRAP: No. 6 CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 1, 4, 10 HOOD: No. 7.

SP FORECAST: 3 Relevant Range, 7-2 Crownthorpe, 6 Wheres The Crumpet, 7 Yorkstone, 8 One More Bottle, Catherine Chroi, 10 Others.

4.50 CLASSIFIED STAKES (DIV 2)
£4,711 (6) 1m 5yds (10)

1 (10) 665745- **AL BAAHY (22)** K Frost 7 9-9...**C Fallon 59**
2 (2) 1940L8- **ANIFICAS BEAUTY (117) (D)** P Winks 7 9-9...**Joanna Mason 58**
3 (5) L90- **AYE UP TOM (260)** S England 4 9-9...**T Eaves 38**
4 (4) 704L50- **FREAK ENCOUNTER (22) (D)** D Whillans 4 9-9...**J Hart 54**
5 (8) L080- **LADY SONATA (32)** I Furtado 4 9-9...**D Nolan 46**
6 (9) 057990- **MADAME PLAINTIFF (21)** A Brown 5 9-9...**S B Kirrane 54**
7 (3) 3L053-4 ● **PINK SOCKS (6) (D) (T)** I Williams 7 9-9...**B Loughnane 58**
8 (6) 80425-6 **POP FAVORITE (6) (C&D)** S Dixon 8 9-9...**J Haynes 55**
9 (1) 249345- **THAT LUCAS FELLA (45) (F)** I Jardine 4 9-9...**A Mullen ★62**
10 (7) 17670-5 **TOP GUN TINA (6) (D)** D Thompson 6 9-9...**M Winn 53**

BLINKERS: Nos. 8, 9 TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 4, 5 CHEEK PIECES: No. 6 HOOD: No. 6.

SP FORECAST: 11-4 Pink Socks, 3 That Lucas Fella, 4 Al Baahy, 8 Top Gun Tina, Freak Encounter, 10 Pop Favorite, 16 Madame Plaintiff, 20 Lady Sonata, 25 Others.

5.20 NOVICE STAKES
£6,480 (3) 1m 5yds (5)

1 (5) 21- ● **INSPIRED (25) (C&D,F)** K R Burke 4 9-11...**P-L Jamin ★85**
2 (3) 55- **AL MUDDY (47)** S Spencer 6 9-4...**A Jary(3) 73**
3 (4) **MULTANEIGHTTOTHREE** G Tuer 4 9-4...**O Stammers –**
4 (1) 6/5- **RAJSTAR (25)** B Haslam 4 9-4...**P Mulrennan 57**
5 (2) 2- **TED LE SAUX (39) (F) (T)** A Balding 4 9-4...**Jason Watson 82**

SP FORECAST: 8-15 Inspired, 5-2 Ted Le Saux, 12 Multaneighttothree, 16 Al Muddy, 25 Rajstar.

5.50 BET 10 GET 40 WITH BETMGM HANDICAP
£4,711 (6) 7f 14yds (12)

1 (12) 5533/45- **STORM THE DUG (32)** L Russell & M Scudamore 4 9-9
D Nolan 71
2 (7) 27538L- **BEELZEBUB (28) (C&D)** G Tutty 6 9-9...**Kaiya Fraser 75**
3 (10) 093711- ● **GOLDMOYNE (12) (C,D) (T)** James Owen 6 9-9...**C Fallon 74**
4 (11) 31221-4 **CONCERT BOY (9) (C&D)** K Scott 6 9-7...**J Hart ★76**
5 (1) L17313- **FRONT GUNNER (25) (C&D,F)** S Hanlon 5 9-7...**B Loughnane 73**
6 (5) 70L029- **ANGEL OF ENGLAND (23)** A Brown 5 9-5...**S B Kirrane 74**
7 (9) 060L0L- **BONITO CAVALO (28) (C&D)** J Goldie 7 9-5...**P Mulrennan 50**
8 (4) 503- **SIVIEZ (140)** G Tuer 4 9-5...**O Stammers 58**
9 (3) L5732-1 **TRAIS FLUORS (9) (C&D)** Miss L Perratt 12 9-2...**A Jary(3) 73**
10 (8) 407647- **LORD CAPULET (82)** K Ryan 4 9-1...**T Eaves 72**
11 (6) 5556- **CARIDA (22)** S G West 4 8-13...**A Brookes(3) 69**
12 (2) 5L/99L1- **RIDGEMASTER (22) (C&D)** S Waugh 4 8-11...**A Waugh(3) 73**

BLINKERS: No. 4 VISOR: No. 6 TONGUE STRAP: No. 2 CHEEK PIECES: No. 3.

SP FORECAST: 9-4 Concert Boy, 7-2 Goldmoyne, 8 Trais Fluors, Front Gunner, 12 Lord Capulet, Angel Of England, 14 Storm The Dug, Carida, 16 Others.

VITAL STATISTICS

IN-FORM TRAINERS (last 10 days) R Beckett 80% (3 wins and 1 places from 5 runners), S Edmunds 71% (1/4/7), C Boultbee-Brooks 62% (2/3/8), A Ralph 57% (3/1/7), E Lavelle 57% (2/2/7), James Owen 56% (6/12/32), D Skelton 52% (8/6/27), D M Simcock 50% (2/3/10), G Tuer 50% (1/2/6), P Nicholls 50% (5/8/26).

IN-FORM JOCKEYS Charlie Hammond 80% (1 wins and 3 places from 5 runners), Robert Dunne 75% (1/2/4), Hector Crouch 71% (7/8/21), Pat Cosgrave 67% (2/6/12), Neil Callan 64% (4/3/11), Gavin Sheehan 60% (3/3/10), Lorcan Williams 60% (2/4/10), Harry Cobden 52% (2/9/21), Billy Loughnane 50% (5/6/22), Freddie Keighley 50% (1/3/8), Harry Atkins 50% (2/1/6), Harry Davies 50% (4/4/16), Jonathan Burke 50% (4/2/12), Kielan Woods 50% (1/3/8), Myla Coppins 50% (1/1/4), Oliver Stammers 50% (1/2/6).

NEWCASTLE SSR

6.20 HANDICAP 3YO
£4,397 (5) 5f (6)

1 (3) 365- ● **KING OF CHAOS (116) (T)** D Cunha 9-9...**C Fallon 73**
2 (2) 6523- **JUSTMYLUCK (22)** Miss L Perratt 9-8...**P Mulrennan 73**
3 (4) 5431- **SOUND AND VISION (22) (D,F) (T)** E Walker 9-7
B Loughnane ★78
4 (5) 4335- **SEE THAT SPARK (32)** E Bethell 9-5...**C Rodriguez 73**
5 (6) 452- **MERESIDE SPARK (109) (F)** D & N Barron 8-13
L Edmunds 74
6 (1) 341421- **MAD UNICORN (26) (D,F) (T)** Michael Keady 8-13
Jason Watson 73

VISOR: No. 4.

SP FORECAST: 2 Sound And Vision, 7-2 Mad Unicorn, 4 Justmyluck, 11-2 Mereside Spark, 8 King Of Chaos, See That Spark.

6.50 HANDICAP (DIV 1)
£4,711 (6) 6f (8)

1 (1) 60704-1 **PENNY MOUNTAIN (9) (C&D)** Gary Rutherford 5 9-9
Kaiya Fraser ★66
2 (2) L5L84-2 **COURT OF SESSION (6) (T)** P McEntee 7 9-9...**B Loughnane 65**
3 (8) 6/51646- **FLASH THE DASH (53) (C&D)** J Camacho 7 9-8
T Kiely-Marshall(5) 63
4 (3) 322113- ● **YORKSHIRE GLORY (12) (C&D)** B Haslam 5 9-6...**A Mullen 64**
5 (4) 6L232-1 **SPARTAN FIGHTER (9) (C&D,F)** A Brittain 9 9-4...**C Hardie 63**
6 (7) 614670- **PINPOINT (32)** Ewan Whillans 5 9-2...**G Fairley 60**
7 (5) 50842-5 **FIRCOMBE HALL (9) (C&D)** P Kirby 8 9-1...**Rhys Elliott(5) 64**
8 (6) 37409-5 **SHE'SASHAMBLES (9) (D)** Phillip Makin 5 9-0...**S Gray 61**

VISOR: Nos. 2, 5, 6 TONGUE STRAP: No. 6 CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 3, 7, 8.

SP FORECAST: 2 Spartan Fighter, 4 Penny Mountain, 9-2 Yorkshire Glory, 13-2 Fircombe Hall, Court Of Session, 8 Flash The Dash, 14 She'sashambles, 50 Pinpoint.

7.20 HANDICAP (DIV 2)
£4,711 (6) 6f (8)

1 (7) 252348- ● **ASADJUMEIRAH (21) (C&D)** A Brittain 8 9-9...**C Hardie 64**
2 (4) 340332- **INSTANT BOND (12) (F) (T)** M Wigham 5 9-9...**P Mulrennan 65**
3 (1) 70345-3 **RAMON DI LORIA (6) (C,D)** Ewan Whillans 8 9-7...**J Hart 63**
4 (8) 9426L9- **BELLA LOVE (25)** I Furtado 4 9-6...**J Nason(3) ★68**
5 (2) 251333- **SUPERIOR COUNCIL (25) (C&D)** I Jardine 7 9-4...**C Tuke(7) 64**
6 (6) 995L2-7 **ATHOLLBLAIR BOY (9) (C&D)** N Tinkler 13 9-2
F McManoman 63
7 (3) 96L7/L3- **QUEEN FOR ADAAY (343)** D Shaw 5 9-0...**L Edmunds 66**
8 (5) 578LL-L **POET (4) (C&D)** S Dixon 7 9-0...**J Haynes 55**

BLINKERS: Nos. 5, 8 VISOR: No. 7 TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 1, 5 CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 1, 3 HOOD: No. 4.

SP FORECAST: 13-8 Instant Bond, 7-2 Superior Council, 4 Ramon Di Loria, 6 Asadjumeirah, 10 Athollblair Boy, Queen For Adaay, 33 Bella Love, 66 Poet.

TRACK FACTS: GOING: Standard. Left Handed. **TOP TRACK JOCKEY (2021-26):** Paul Mulrennan 14% Strike rate. **TOP TRACK TRAINER (2021-26):** R Fahey 11% Strike rate. **FIRST TIME:** 3.10 Woodshaw (cheek pieces), Time Turner (visor), 4.50 Lady Sonata (tongue strap), 5.50 Angel Of England (visor), 6.20 See That Spark (visor). **BEATEN FAVOURITES:** No Qualifiers. **DRAW:** High numbers have a slight advantage over 5f. **LONGEST TRAVELLER: Ted Le Saux** (5.20) 303 miles. **STABLE SWITCH:** 4.20 **Eagles Whistle** from P J F Murphy in Ireland to D Bourke. 5.50 **Front Gunner** from Mrs A Duffield to S Hanlon. 6.20 **King Of Chaos** from G Scott to D Cunha.

FAIRYHOUSE RTV (7.30AM INSP.)

THE SCOUT

12.00 Macho Man
12.30 Bambino Fever
1.05 Dippedinmoonlight
1.40 Western Diego
2.15 Karoline Banbou
2.49 Nelson County
3.24 The Wager

12.00 TOTE GUARANTEE, NEVER BEATEN BY SP HURDLE 4YO
€10,200 2m (9 declared)

1 1 ● **MACHO MAN (101)** W P Mullins 11-5...**P Townend 129**
2 1 **PROACTIF (119)** W P Mullins 11-5...**M P Walsh 133**
3 116 **QUINTA DO LAGO (15)** J Harrington 11-5...**J W Kennedy 129**
4 5 **BERTO RAMIREZ (28)** A McNamara 11-0...**B Hayes 109**
5 2333 **COMBS (12)** G Elliott 11-0...**K P Healy(7) ★134**
6 7L **FAR ECLIPSE (14)** G Cromwell 11-0...**K Buckley 94**
7 091 **IT'S BOBSLED TIME (26)** Richard Morrissey 11-0...**M Kenneally(7) 114**
8 3 **MUNSIF (14)** C Byrnes 11-0...**P Byrnes 119**
9 4U7 **IN MY TEENS (15)** G Cromwell 10-7...**S D Torrens 120**

TONGUE STRAP: No. 5 CHEEK PIECES: No. 5 HOOD: Nos. 8, 9.

SP FORECAST: 11-8 Macho Man, 9-4 Proactif, 7 Combs, 8 Quinta Do Lago, 12 It's Bobsled Time, In My Teens, 14 Munsif, 50 Berto Ramirez, 100 Far Eclipse.
2025: Bacchanalian 11-0, Sean O'Keeffe 4-5 Fav (D Queally), 6 ran.

12.30 DOWNLOAD THE TOTE APP MARES MAIDEN HURDLE
€7,200 2m 2f 55yds (14)

1 1 **ALLITERATION (76)** J P Dempsey 5 11-7...**K M Donoghue –**
2 **ANNIE'S BELLE** C O'Connell 5 11-7...**James Smith(5) –**
3 1111-12 ● **BAMBINO FEVER (26)** W P Mullins 6 11-7...**P Townend ★131**
4 L- **CASTLEROCK LADY (390)** P Downey 7 11-7...**A Balfe(7) –**
5 4 **CORNELIENNE (26)** J P O'Brien 5 11-7...**M P Walsh 114**
6 F0 **FAMILY GETAWAY (26)** G Elliott 5 11-7...**J W Kennedy 52**
7 4-L69 **LITTLE IVY (15)** Peter Fahey 6 11-7...**D Gilligan 87**
8 311-3 **MISS DOYENNE (15)** H De Bromhead 6 11-7...**D J O'Keeffe 122**
9 865 **MISS GEORGINA (44)** Andrew Lee 6 11-7...**J Shinnick(3) 97**
10 80 **ODE TO JOY (62)** W J McLernon 6 11-7...**Liam McKenna(5) –**
11 2315 **SUSIE LENGLEN (26)** N Meade 5 11-7...**S Ewing 105**
12 47783 **TALAS KERA (9)** J G Carr 5 11-7...**P M O'Brien(5) 92**
13 8L **TELLMEMAMEMA (21)** E Buckley 6 11-7...**K Buckley 91**
14 0-F23FL **WHISPERING HOPES (92)** L Lennon 6 11-7...**Mr E P Powell(7) 116**

TONGUE STRAP: No. 2 HOOD: No. 7.

SP FORECAST: 4-11 Bambino Fever, 6 Cornelienne, Miss Doyenne, 10 Alliteration, 14 Susie Lenglen, 16 Whispering Hopes, 33 Miss Georgina, Family Getaway, 50 Others.
2025: No corresponding race.

1.05 TOTE ALWAYS SP OR BETTER HANDICAP HURDLE
€9,600 3m (9)

1 123F0-9 **MINELLA SIXO (162) (C)** G Elliott 7 12-1...**P Cleary(7) 99**
2 10-6P4L **NOBLE BIRTH (14)** G Cromwell 9 11-7...**K M Donoghue 127**
3 711136 **BAL KAUTO (69)** D Queally 9 11-2...**Mr D L Queally 129**
4 23/2310- **FIND A FORTUNE (329) (C)** G Elliott 9 11-0...**J W Kennedy 132**
5 1314-P8 **VERDANT PLACE (27) (D)** P T Foley 8 10-12...**S D Torrens –**
6 2-62151 **FOUND A DIAMOND (27)** R O'Sullivan 6 10-10...**Shane Markey(7) 135**
7 213-845 ● **DIPPEDINMOONLIGHT (15)** E Mullins 6 10-9...**D Mullins 125**
8 333464 **FROM THE ASHES (13)** C Byrnes 9 10-6...**P Byrnes 134**
9 35-568U **YOUR HONOR (12)** J Nash 7 10-6...**D Gilligan ★138**

BLINKERS: No. 9 TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 2, 3 CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 2, 5, 6, 8 HOOD: No. 3.

SP FORECAST: 13-8 Found A Diamond, 4 Dippedinmoonlight, 5 From The Ashes, 6 Bal Kauto, 8 Find A Fortune, 12 Verdant Place, Noble Birth, Minella Sixo, 25 Your Honor.
2025: King Alexander 7-11-12, Paul Townend 15-8 Fav (W P Mullins), 8 ran.

1.40 HANDICAP CHASE (GRADE 3)
€60,000 (1) 2m 1f 30yds (12) ITV4

1 33-21L3 **BLOOD DESTINY (98)** W P Mullins 7 11-12...**P Townend ★161**
2 22L4-L2 **TOUCH ME NOT (42)** G Elliott 7 11-11...**James Smith(5) 156**
3 12/13-FL **INTHEPOCKET (35)** H De Bromhead 9 11-9...**M P Walsh 108**
4 22P-P2P **TULLYHILL (35)** W P Mullins 8 11-3...**D Mullins 147**
5 04-P356 **PATH D'OROUX (14)** G Cromwell 9 11-2...**K Buckley 157**
6 171-077 **THE OTHER MOZZIE (34) (D)** G Cromwell 7 11-2...**C Stone-Walsh 156**
7 5PP231 **DRUMGILL (42) (C&D)** J P Ryan 7 10-11...**M Kenneally(7) 152**
8 1383-0L **MIDNIGHT IT IS (42) (C&D)** G Cromwell 10 10-9...**S W Flanagan 157**
9 08-5B59 **THE KING OF PRS (15) (C&D)** G Cromwell 8 10-8...**E Staples(5) 145**
10 4625-83 ● **WESTERN DIEGO (42)** W P Mullins 9 10-4...**B Hayes 158**
11 256574 **ST FAZ (21) (D)** G Elliott 6 10-0...**S Ewing 154**
12 2F-4589 **MORE COKO (42)** W P Mullins 6 10-0...**Sean Cleary-Farrell(7) 154**

TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 1, 4, 9, 11 CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 6, 11 HOOD: Nos. 10, 12.

SP FORECAST: 4 Touch Me Not, 11-2 Inthepocket, 6 Blood Destiny, Western Diego, 7 Drumgill, 8 Tullyhill, 10 The King Of Prs, 14 The Other Mozzie, More Coko, 16 Others.
2025: The King Of Prs 7-10-4, Conor Stone-Walsh(5) 11-2 (G Cromwell), 12 ran.

2.15 IRISH STALLION FARMS EBF BEGINNERS CHASE
€9,300 2m 1f 30yds (8)

1 3/2129-8 **DR EGGMAN (50)** W P Mullins 8 11-12...**D Mullins 91**
2 6/61264- **JINXS LINK (350)** M Rice 10 11-12...**James Smith(5) –**
3 42-4542 **KOORI STAR (35)** Peter Fahey 8 11-12...**D Gilligan 116**
4 254-000 **PARK OF KINGS (35)** P Nolan 8 11-12...**C Stone-Walsh 94**
5 LP310-L **PORT JOULAIN (30)** W P Mullins 7 11-12...**P Townend 85**
6 40-0 **RELIABLE PRINCE (34)** E Bolger 6 11-12...**Charlie O'Dwyer(5) –**
7 412900 **STUNTMAN STEVE (106)** G Cromwell 7 11-12...**K M Donoghue –**
8 2146-72 ● **KAROLINE BANBOU (28)** W P Mullins 6 11-5...**M P Walsh ★138**

SP FORECAST: 4-6 Karoline Banbou, 5 Koori Star, Stuntman Steve, 8 Port Joulain, 16 Dr Eggman, 33 Park Of Kings, Jinxs Link, 50 Reliable Prince.
2025: Mistergif 6-11-12, J J Slevin 7-2 (W P Mullins), 12 ran.

2.49 IRISH STALLION FARMS EBF RATED NOVICE CHASE
€11,101 2m 5f 150yds (8)

1 152/2-LF **CHOCCABLOC (15)** A McNamara 8 12-0...**B Hayes 102**
2 632761 **JACOVEC CAVERN (63)** P Hennessy 7 12-0...**R J Condon(5) 119**
3 5F35-34 **MISS PRONUNCIATION (42)** P Roche 9 11-13...**M P Walsh 121**
4 769-1P7 **CASTLE FIELD BOY (27) (C)** P T Foley 10 11-12...**E Staples(5) 121**
5 35U967 **ME WEE BONNIE LASS (28)** G Cromwell 7 11-10...**K M Donoghue ★123**
6 B2-17P3 **BEGGARS ROCK (7)** G Elliott 7 11-9...**K Sexton 120**
7 68341-4 ● **NELSON COUNTY (48)** R O'Sullivan 6 11-9...**D Gilligan 122**
8 806-LU9 **ATTABOYARCHIE (10)** K Thornton 9 10-13...**Miss E J Sweeney(7) 105**

BLINKERS: No. 6 TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 1, 3, 4 HOOD: No. 3.

SP FORECAST: 5-2 Beggars Rock, 3 Me Wee Bonnie Lass, 6 Miss Pronunciation, Castle Field Boy, 7 Jacovec Cavern, 8 Nelson County, 12 Choccabloc, 20 Attaboyarchie.
2025: Noble Birth 8-11-10, Keith Donoghue 11-4 Fav (G Cromwell), 9 ran.

3.24 (PRO/AM) FLAT RACE
€6,000 2m (12)

1 P/P-PP **CLONSAST (35)** P Flood 6 12-0...**Miss G Benson(7) –**
2 641- **DETROIT MAVERICK (269)** G Elliott 6 12-0...**Mr H C Swan –**
3 3/ **DOCTOR ELVIS (777)** G Elliott 7 12-0...**Mr J M Halford(7) –**
4 096 **DORIE MILLER (15)** N Meade 5 12-0...**Mr J H Williamson(5) 84**
5 4 **MARTYMILL (41)** A McCann 5 12-0...**Mr D McGill(7) ★96**
6 2 **MOMENTS AWAY (229)** D H Kelly 5 12-0...**Mr Adam Ryan(5) 89**
7 **PINNDAR** T Cooper 5 12-0...**Mr D O'Connor –**
8 3225-37 **SILVER SALUTE (15)** Ian Donoghue 7 12-0...**Mr J Dunne(7) –**
9 2- ● **THE WAGER (320)** W P Mullins 5 12-0...**Mr P W Mullins 95**
10 **LAKE ISLE** Colm Murphy 5 11-7...**Mr J P O'Rourke(7) –**
11 90 **LAYENDA (26)** Colm Murphy 5 11-7...**Mr P A Murphy(7) –**
12 49 **ORINOCO WALK (42)** R Dunne 8 11-7...**R Barry(7) 73**

HOOD: Nos. 1, 10.

SP FORECAST: 15-8 The Wager, 3 Detroit Maverick, 6 Pinndar, Martymill, 7 Doctor Elvis, 8 Moments Away, 16 Silver Salute, Lake Isle, 20 Others.
2025: No corresponding race.

TRACK FACTS: GOING: Yielding. Right Handed. **TOP TRACK JOCKEY (2021-26):** Paul Townend 37% Strike rate. **TOP TRACK TRAINER (2021-26):** W P Mullins 24% Strike rate. **FIRST TIME:** 1.05 Verdant Place (cheek pieces), 3.24 Clonsast (hood), Lake Isle (hood), 12.00 Munsif (hood), 12.30 Annie's Belle (tongue strap). **BEATEN FAVOURITES:** 12.30 Bambino Fever. 1.05 Bal Kauto(hcp ch). 1.40 Inthepocket(hcp ch). 2.15 Karoline Banbou. 2.49 Beggars Rock(hcp ch), Miss Pronunciation(hcp ch). **LONGEST TRAVELLER: Miss Georgina** (12.30) Ireland; **It's Bobsled Time** (12.00) 113 miles. **STABLE SWITCH:** 12.00 **Macho Man** from Gab Leenders to W P Mullins, **Proactif** from Mme E Mele in France to W P Mullins. 12.30 **Whispering Hopes** from G Elliott in Ireland to L Lennon. 3.24 **Clonsast** from P J Flood to P Flood, **Detroit Maverick** from C Bowe in Ireland to G Elliott, **The Wager** from P M J Doyle to W P Mullins.

THE SCOUT'S SCOOP SIX HINTS

Leg 1 LE GALLI BIER (No 11)
(1.15 Warwick)
Leg 2 WESTERN DIEGO (No 10)
(1.40 Fairyhouse)
Leg 3 BEST WOMEN (No 12)
(2.25 Warwick)
Leg 4 MYRETOWN (No 5)
(2.55 Warwick)
Leg 5 LANESBOROUGH (No 6)
(3.17 Kempton)
Leg 6 LORD SNOOTIE (No 7)
(3.32 Warwick)

WORLD OF SPORT

Broncos in big plans for World domination

BY **JOSH MCALLISTER**

RUGBY LGE

BRISBANE BRONCOS are going all out to claim this year's World Club Challenge after devising an extensive preparation for next month's clash against Hull KR.

The two reigning champions will go head-to-head in a highly anticipated showdown at MKM Stadium on February 19.

Hull KR flew to Tenerife yesterday as they build towards the 2026 season.

The Robins will open their campaign against Super League newcomers York Knights on February 12 before facing Michael Maguire's Brisbane side.

CARRIGAN

After a two-week training camp in Queensland, the Broncos will fly to London on February 10.

Patrick Carrigan is expected to recover from a broken thumb in time for the World Club Challenge, but Brisbane face a concern in the back-row, with Brendan Piakura suffering a knee injury in training.

THE BIG PICTURE

IN TUNE: Emilea Zingas and Vadym Kolesnik at the US Figure Skating Championships

TENNIS

SONAY KARTAL agonisingly missed out on a place in the ASB Classic semi-finals after losing an intense battle with top seed Elina Svitolina.

The British No.2 has looked sharp in Auckland and served for the match in the deciding set but Svitolina fought back to claim a 6-4 6-7 7-6 victory.

The Ukrainian praised Kartal, saying: "Sonay played a really great match and was striking the ball well. Fighting spirit really carried me through the match."

Fran Jones was unable to complete her quarter-final against Chinese seventh seed Wang Xinyu, the 25-year-old withdrawing injured while trailing 6-4 4-3.

At the Brisbane International, world No.1 Aryna Sabalenka beat Madison Keys 6-3 6-3, but WTA Finals champion Elena Rybakina saw her winning run ended 6-2 2-6 6-4 by Karolina Muchova.

10 to tackle

1. Which rider won the WSX class in the third round of the 2025 FIM Supercross World Championship, in Australia?
2. **Who replaced an injured Mark Wood for England in the second Ashes Test in Brisbane last month?**
3. For which URC club did Rieko Ioane sign for this season on a sabbatical from Blues?
4. **Which English team were runners-up in the Fairs Cup in 1960 and 1961?**
5. In what year did Juan Manuel Fangio win the last of his five Formula One World Drivers' Championships?
6. **Which Trinidadian sprinter won the men's 100m at the 1976 Olympics?**
7. Which golfer won the 2013 Open Championship at Muirfield?
8. **Which Australian tennis player won the Wimbledon men's singles in 1960?**
9. Which former boxer lit the Olympic Torch at Atlanta in 1996?
10. **Which American figure skater was 2002 Olympic women's singles gold medallist?**

RATINGS
0-3 Oh dear
4-6 Small beer
7-9 So near
10 Sporting Seer

ANSWERS: 1 Ken Roczen. 2 Will Jacks. 3 Leinster. 4 Birmingham City. 5 1957. 6 Hasely Crawford. 7 Phil Mickelson. 8 Neale Fraser. 9 Muhammad Ali. 10 Sarah Hughes.

We want to change the narrative

TOMMY GUNNING TO SEND A MESSAGE

PROVING GROUND
Freeman says Saints will relish chance to atone for defeat in the final last season (below)

BORDEAUX v NORTHAMPTON
Champions Cup: Pool 4, KO 3.15pm tomorrow

BY **ADAM HATHAWAY**

TOMMY FREEMAN is on a revenge mission in Bordeaux tomorrow aiming to strike an early blow for the English ahead of the Six Nations.

Freeman lines up at centre for Northampton in the Champions Cup against holders Bordeaux-Begles, who beat Saints 28-20 last season in a Cardiff final that finished in a dust-up.

Henry Pollock was at the centre of an on-pitch scrap post-match and the subject of taunts from the French side on social media the day after. Bordeaux-Begles, boasting France wings Louis Bielle-Biarrey and Damian Penaud, are 11-point favourites for this clash but Saints revel in acting as gate-crashers, as they showed by toppling Leinster in Dublin in last season's semi.

Both sides have won their opening two matches in pool four, but tomorrow's winner will take a huge step towards the latter stages by sealing a likely top seed spot.

Freeman said: "Leinster, they gave us that underdog status but we've proved to people and others that we can perform and despite being the underdog we can deliver our same performance week-in, week-out.

"We want to change that narrative and be considered a threat and be the team that can really do them. It'd be nice to kick them out early doors because they are a good team. They've got some unbelievable individuals, and they can create something from nothing.

"Phil Dowson [head coach] talks about going on adventures and creating memories and we did that at other places. To do that at Bordeaux will be pretty special."

Freeman has not been on a losing side this season, with England or Northampton, and was in national camp on Monday for a pre-Six Nations meeting with the squad.

That tournament ends with England facing France in Paris, potentially a championship decider, and Saints' Red Rose brigade will get an early taste of French hostility this weekend at Stade Chaban-Delmas.

Freeman, 24, added: "We're buzzing to get going. It's a place we haven't been to since 1998, but there will be 34,000 there. They get whooping and hollering and booing and things like that. We'll definitely step into the challenge. There's a bit of a long walk out to get onto the pitch. It'll be a new experience but we're excited.

"This is why we do it, isn't it? It's the top of the top going against top players and you want to test yourself at that level."

The pick of today's games involving Prem teams is Bristol's trip to Pretoria against the Bulls, also in pool four.

Bears, two from two, have a real chance of winning, like Northampton did last season, and nailing a decent seeding.

Director of rugby Pat Lam has loaded his bench, with prop Ellis Genge and scrum-half Harry Randall primed to come on at the business end.

Elsewhere, winless Leicester entertain Bayonne, who have Tigers' old boy Manu Tuilagi starting in midfield. And Sale host the Sharks who have sent a second-string side from Durban to Salford.

> We've proved despite being the underdog we can deliver. It'd be nice to kick them out early doors

SPORT IN BRIEF

MOTOR SPORT

DAKAR RALLY (Saudi Arabia) **STAGE 6** (Hail - Riyadh, Special)**:** Cars & Bikes: 326km): **Cars**: 1 N Al-Attiyah (Qat) Dacia 3h 38m 28s, S Loeb (Fra) Dacia at 2m 58s, 3 S Quintero (USA) Toyota at 3:19. **Bikes**: 1 R Brabec (USA) Honda 3h 41m 33s,2 T Schareina (Spa) Honda at 1m 14s, 3 D Sanders (Aus) KTM at 1:17. **Overall**: **Car**: 1 N Al-Attiyah (Qat) Dacia 24h 18. 29s, 2 H Lategan (Rsa) Toyota at 6m 10s, 3 N Roma (Spa) Ford at 9:13. **Bikes**: 1 D Sanders (Aus) KTM 24h 41m 00s, 2 R Brabec (USA) Honda at 45s, 3 L Benavides (Arg) KTM at 10:15.

BADMINTON

PETRONAS MALAYSIA OPEN (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia)—**Quarter-FInals**: **Men's Doubles**: B Lane & S Vendy (Eng) bt T Hoki & Y Kobayashi (Jpn) 2-0.

BASKETBALL

NBA: Charlotte 112 Indiana 114, Minnesota 131 Cleveland 122, Utah 116 Dallas 114.

CRICKET

Big Bash League (Hobart)—**Group Stage**: Hobart Hurricanes 178-6; Adelaide Strikers 141-9 (L A H Scott 91no; M R Hossain 3-26). Hobart Hurricanes win by 37 runs.

ICEHOCKEY

NHL: NY Rangers 2 Buffalo 5, Pittsburgh 4 New Jersey 1, Carolina 5 Anaheim 2, Boston 4 Calgary 1, Montreal 6 Florida 2, Detroit 5 Vancouver 1, Philadelphia 1 Toronto 2 (OT), Nashville 2 NY Islanders 1 (SO), Winnipeg 3 Edmonton 4, Colorado 8 Ottawa 2, Seattle 2 Minnesota 3 (OT), Vegas 5 Columbus 3.

SQUASH

PSA WORLD TOUR KARACHI OPEN (Karachi, Pakistan)—**Qtr-Finals: Men's:** (5) M Zakaria (Egy) bt A Lau (Hkg) 3-0; (4) M El Shorbagy (Eng) bt N Zaman (Pak) 3-2. **Women's**: (8) A Azman (Mal) bt (3) F Aboelkheir (Egy) 3-0; (2) S Subramaniam (Mal) bt (7) L Turmel (Eng) 3-0.

TENNIS

WTA ASB CLASSIC (Auckland, New Zealand)—**Quarter Finals**: X Wang (Chn) bt F Jones (Gbr) 6-4 4-3 ret A Eala (Phi) bt M Linette (Pol) 6-3 6-2; I Jovic (USA) bt S Costoulas (Bel) 6-2 7-6 (8-6) E Svitolina (Ukr) bt S Kartal (Gbr) 6-4 6-7 (2-7) 7-6 (7-5).

ATP & WTA BRISBANE INTERNATIONAL (Brisbane, Australia)—**Men's Quarter-Finals**: A Kovacevic (USA) bt G Mpetshi Perricard (Fra) 7-6 (7-3) 4-6 6-3; B Nakashima (USA) bt R Collignon (Bel) 6-3 6-3; A Michelsen (USA) bt S Korda (USA) 6-3 7-6 (9-7) D Medvedev (Rus) bt K Majchrzak (Pol) 6-7 (4-7) 6-3 6-2. **Women's Quarter-Finals**: K Muchova (Cze) bt E Rybakina (Kaz) 6-2 2-6 6-4; A Sabalenka (Blr) bt M Keys (USA) 6-3 6-3; J Pegula (USA) bt L Samsonova (Rus) 6-3 7-6 (7-3) M Kostyuk (Ukr) bt M Andreeva (Rus) 7-6 (9-7) 6-3.

ATP BANK OF CHINA HONG KONG OPEN (Hong Kong, China)—**Quarter-Finals:** L Musetti (Ita) bt C Wong (Hkg) 6-4 6-4; A Rublev (Rus) bt N Borges (Por) 6-3 6-4; A Bublik (Kaz) bt J Shang (Chn) 6-1 7-6 (7-2) M Giron (USA) bt M Mmoh (USA) 6-3 1-0 ret.

ATP & WTA UNITED CUP PERTH (Sydney, Australia)—**Quarter-Final**: Australia v Poland. **Men's Singles**: A de Minaur (Aus) bt H Hurkacz (Pol) 6-4 4-6 6-4. **Women's Singles**: I Swiatek (Pol) bt M Joint (Aus) 6-1 6-1. **Mixed Doubles**: K Kawa (Pol) & J Zielinski (Pol) bt S Hunter (Aus) & J Smith (Aus) 6-4 6-0 Poland bt Australia 2-1.

TODAY'S DIARY

ICE HOCKEY

Elite League: Belfast Giants v Nottingham Panthers, Fife Flyers v Sheffield Steelers, Guildford Flames v Coventry Blaze, Manchester Storm v Cardiff Devils.

RUGBY UNION

Investec Champions Cup Pool 1 (5.30)**:** Clermont Auvergne v Glasgow (3.15), Sale v Sharks. **Pool 3** (5.30)**:** Leicester v Bayonne (8pm), Leinster v La Rochelle. **Pool 4** (8pm)**:** Blue Bulls v Bristol (1pm), Scarlets v Pau.

European Challenge Cup Pool 1 (1pm)**:** Montauban v Black Lion. **Pool 2** (1pm)**:** Benetton Treviso v Dragons (5.30), Lions v Lyon (3.15), Newcastle v Perpignan. **Pool 3** (1pm)**:** Cardiff Rugby v Racing 92 (3.15), Stade Francais v Exeter.

TENNIS

ATP & WTA United Cup (Perth, Sydney, Australia).
ATP & WTA Brisbane International (Brisbane, Australia).
ATP Bank of China Hong Kong Open (Hong Kong, China).
ASB Classic (Auckland, New Zealand).

TIME FOR ANSWERS McCullum wants to stay, but his future is unclear

BAZ JOB ON LINE AS TALKS BEGIN

..but under-fire McCullum is reluctant to rip up script

FROM **RORY DOLLARD** in Sydney

ENGLAND'S under-pressure head coach Brendon McCullum has confirmed talks about his future have started in the aftermath of a disastrous Ashes tour.

The heat is on McCullum after the team 4-1 defeat in Australia, with his England and Wales Cricket Board [ECB] employers launching a review.

The picture got even murkier when news emerged that Harry Brook, captain of the limited-overs side and Ben Stokes' deputy Down Under, had been fined for a late-night altercation with a club bouncer on the eve of an ODI defeat in New Zealand earlier this winter.

The regime is battling a growing perception of unprofessional preparation, loose training methods and a damaging drinking culture. ECB chief executive Richard Gould (right) and chair Richard Thompson were in Sydney to watch the fifth Test.

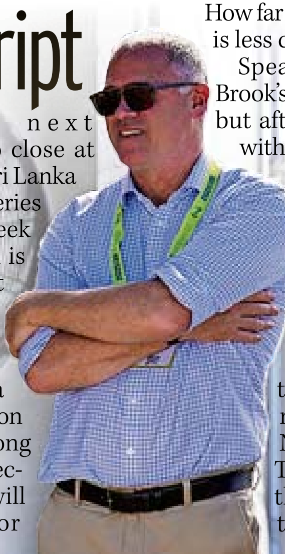
Asked if he had spoken to the pair about his role, McCullum said: "Yeah, I have, but I'm not going to go into that. I'm keen to carry on.

"We haven't quite achieved the goal that we wanted to achieve by coming down here and winning but there has been some progress. You never want to throw out what's worked.

"So I'd be loath to want to rip the script up and try and rediscover a completely different method."

England's next assignment is so close at hand – flying to Sri Lanka for a white-ball series in little over a week – that McCullum is expected to lead it regardless of the review.

But it is apparent that a detailed explanation of what went wrong and a clear prospectus for change, will be needed. Poor results, allied to unwanted headlines relating to the team's social habits, mean the status quo cannot hold. How far McCullum is willing to bend is less certain.



Speaking before the news of Brook's scuffle in Wellington broke, but after it was settled internally with a reported £30,000 fine and a conduct warning, the New Zealander defended the environment.

That included the four-day trip to Noosa after the second Test, likened by witnesses to a "stag do".

"Breaks are vitally important when you're on the road," McCullum said. "I felt Noosa was quite important. They enjoyed themselves off the field and I don't think they did things to excess."

SPIN CYCLE Bashir was among those fast-tracked

STOKES' HONEST REVIEW

FROM BACK PAGE

fortunes in the way they had hoped, while the likes of Zak Crawley, Ollie Pope and Ben Duckett also faltered badly in Australia.

With the 18-month countdown on for the next home Ashes, Stokes is preparing to take a hard line.

"Speaking the truth and saying things you don't want to hear is sometimes the best thing," he said.

"I've not been up to the levels that I expected of myself as an all-round player and a captain... there is nothing wrong with being truthful. You are always mindful and cautious of saying completely what's on your mind because you don't want things to implode in the dressing room, but there will be a few things that the senior guys do to come together and be honest about going forward."

Assessing the downturn in results for the team, who enjoyed a major spike in performance when Stokes and head coach Brendon McCullum took over but have not sustained, the captain offered an honest take.

"Over the first couple of years teams found it difficult to try and come up with anything to combat the way we've played, but now teams are coming up with plans that are standing up to a certain style of cricket we want to play," he said.

"There's been moments throughout this series and even before that where we've almost gifted the flow of the game back to the opposition.

"When you come up against a team like Australia who know how to play cricket out here and you're also adding to your own downfall, you're going to end up losing the series 4-1.

"But I love having a challenge thrown at me and at the moment the challenge is getting the team back to where we once were."

WILL POWER Williams is aiming to guide Bears to a first play-off win since 2010

Confident Caleb out to end Bears' long hibernation

AMERICAN FOOTBALL

BY **KEITH WEBSTER**

CALEB WILLIAMS believes his career has been destined for tonight as 14 teams start the knockout road to Super Bowl LX.

The quarterback, 24, was the first college player picked in the 2024 draft, with the Chicago Bears believing he was the future.

And tonight, Williams will lead them out at Soldier Field in the first round of the play-offs against their greatest rival, the Green Bay Packers, with Chicago looking for their first play-off win in 15 years.

"I am built for these moments, mentality-wise," said Williams. "I've been in a bunch of big-rival games before [in college]. In these moments, I think I can provide a spark.

"I have trust in myself, belief in myself, a little bit of that arrogant confidence on the field and then the trust and belief in who I have protecting me."

Packers' quarterback, Jordan Love, knows the level of competition will go up as teams target a Super Bowl place on February 8.

"It's win or go home," said Love. "The intensity of playoff games definitely amps up. Everyone knows what's at stake."

Carolina come into the play-offs as the rank underdog, but quarterback Bryce Young, whose side face the LA Rams tonight said: "Regardless of [being the underdog], we know what we are capable of."

Rams head coach Sean McVay said: "This is a blessing that these guys have earned. There's 18 teams [already eliminated] who would love to be in this situation."

MURPH AIM TO PLEASE

SNOOKER

BY **NEIL GOULDING**

DEFENDING champion Shaun Murphy hopes he can cope with the Alexandra Palace pressure cooker to complete a memorable hat-trick of Masters crowns.

The Magician conjured up a magical spell last season by beating Kyren Wilson 10-7 in a stellar final.

And ahead of his first-round showdown with Wu Yize tomorrow, Murphy (right) is ready to impress in front of a capacity crowd of 2,200 people.

He said: "My first commitment is to win the match, but my very close second commitment is the duty to entertain. The atmosphere on day one is electric, there's probably no more of an intimidating place to play."

SANCHO THE LION

BY **DARREN WELLS**

ASTON VILLA boss Unai Emery has backed Jadon Sancho to force his way back into England World Cup reckoning.

On-loan Manchester United winger Sancho, 25, has started just seven games for Villa this season only two in the Premier League. Sancho (inset) has not been called up for his country since October 2021 and was not selected for the last two major tournaments.

But Emery believes the winger, who is expected to start against Tottenham today, can stake a claim for a Three Lions spot at this summer's World Cup.

"He has a huge potential, still being young but with a really long time in his career as a player performing fantastically," Emery said.

He added: "He must have his challenge of coming back with his national team. Of course, until now he didn't deserve it.

"But he has the challenge and I have spoken with him about it. He has the talent to come back."

FRANK: I CAME HERE TO FINISH TOP

READY FOR A RUN

Joy in the FA Cup could give Spurs boss Frank relief from the pressure of the Prem

Dreadful form has fans fuming but boss aims high and won't accept failure

TOTTENHAM v ASTON VILLA

FA Cup: Third round, KO 5.45pm

BY **ALASDAIR GOLD** and **GEORGE SESSIONS**

THOMAS FRANK has made it clear he did not join Tottenham to finish anywhere other than top of the Premier League.

The Dane has found life tough at Spurs with just two wins in his past 12 Premier League matches.

And he has an injury list which has stirred memories of the problems Ange Postecoglou faced last winter. Spurs sold last season's top scorer Brennan Johnson to Crystal Palace for £35million, only for Mohammed Kudus to be ruled out until April.

Tottenham sit 14th in the table and after last season's 17th-place finish, and Frank has no intention of accepting mediocrity.

"That's impossible at Tottenham," he said. "I didn't just come to this club to finish 14th, 10th, eighth, sixth, fourth, third, second.

"We want to build something that can be very successful all the time. I'm very aware where we are at the moment. I know where we want to go."

Frank is waiting to be able to use key players and long-term absentees Dominic Solanke and Dejan Kulusevski.

Spurs go into their FA Cup clash with high-flying Aston Villa today without Kudus, Kulusevski, Solanke, Rodrigo Bentancur, Lucas Bergvall, James Maddison and potentially Destiny Udogie, although the Italian is back in training.

Frank will also be without captain Cristian Romero, banned for one game and fined £50,000 fine by the FA for failing to leave the pitch promptly after his red card against Liverpool.

Former Tottenham captain Gary Mabbutt believes today's visit of Villa can be the start of an overdue FA Cup run.

"I like Thomas Frank, I think he's a very good manager, I like his ideas and I think he's very honest," he said Mabbutt.

He added: "I believe we have the players, we have youngsters coming through the ranks, our new signings are settling in but he's been hampered by injuries.

"We have to deal with that, every team does, but it's very much onwards and upwards.

"An FA Cup run is on. Aston Villa have been doing well in the league but now it's whether they will see the league as their main target."

Emirates FA CUP
Adobe WFA CUP
The new home of the
FA CUP
TNT SPORTS
DISCOVERY+ | EE | SKY | VIRGIN MEDIA
Return of the MACC
RONNIE'S ROCKET DOWNS TOON
FAMILY STRIKE FORC
JAYDEN'S GOT THE EX FACTOR!
GRIMSBY FEAR WESTON-SUPER SCARE
BOOM
HOWARD SEALS HISTORIC WIN

New boss keen to make good impression with players and media

LIAM QUICK TO BUILD BRIDGES

ROSEY'S FIRST STEPS

New Chelsea boss Rosenior gets his message across during training this week

CHARLTON v CHELSEA

FA Cup: Third round, KO 8pm

BY **BOBBY VINCENT**

LIAM ROSENIOR arrived two minutes early for his first press conference as Chelsea head coach and he used that time to greet every single journalist in the room.

A small gesture but one he did not have to do, and one that not all managers do.

Rosenior, who was announced as the new Blues boss earlier in the week, would have known prior to walking into the room the sort of questions he would be asked. There are big question marks over the 41-year-old's appointment.

Rosenior has not managed in the Premier League before and the magnitude of working at a club like Chelsea is something the former Strasbourg head coach will not be used to.

From the off, though, Rosenior came out fighting; answering some difficult questions with poise and assurance. He turned many potentially negative questions into positive answers – and even joked with one reporter about how the media tend to focus on the negatives.

Rosenior is an incredibly confident man, but was eager for that not to be twisted for arrogance.

"I just said do not limit your ambitions," said Rosenior. "I'm not arrogant. I am good at what I do.

"And in every job that I've worked, whether it was an interim, as an assistant, as a head coach or a manager, whatever you want to call it, relative to the group I've worked with, I've been successful.

"The biggest challenge in any club, in any team, is making sure you create the right culture, you create the right spirit, you have the right values.

"The reality at this football club, the talent levels that I've seen in the last two days of training, the ability of the players is world-class. I've got a fantastic group to work with, which I'm very excited about.

"My job is to have a team that runs, fights for each other, that plays with spirit and quality. That's what I'm going to focus on."

'I could be special too'

FROM BACK PAGE

the same for anyone. You're not a name until you become a name.

"I'm in a fantastically privileged position that I'm going to do my very best to take advantage of.

"Don't judge what you hear. Judge what you see on the pitch. Don't judge my press conferences. I don't win any games here.

"Give myself, my staff and my players the chance to prove we are worthy.

"If the performances aren't good enough, I'll be the first one to say it's not good enough.

"But please don't start... Give us the chance."

Rosenior took his first training session at Cobham on Thursday afternoon and is looking to build a culture at the club, one that is more significant than tactics and game plans.

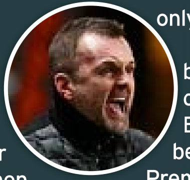
He said: "The job is to create spirit, energy, a culture."

JONES AIMS TO PUT ON A BOLD FRONT

BY **NEIL McLEMAN**

NATHAN JONES wants his Charlton side to be "bold and brave" against the billionaires from Chelsea tonight – and then see the fixture return every year in the top flight.

The Addicks face the Blues at a sold-out Valley for the first time since 2007 when they were still in the Premier League. It will also be Liam Rosenior's first game in charge of Chelsea. Charlton, who won the League One play-offs last season, sit 19th in the Championship after only one win in 11.



But former Southampton boss Jones (left), who coached Rosenior at Brighton, said: "The gulf between Championship and Premier League is big.

"He's probably got a billion pound squad. I'm sure he's not there panicking. Cole Palmer, Liam Delap, Neto, Fernandez, Joao Pedro. World-class players. There's at least one World Cup winner in that squad.

"Do we worry about it? No. Is it a challenge? Yes. This time last year we were two leagues apart and worlds apart. We've managed to bridge that gap slightly – eventually we would like Chelsea to be a minimum twice a year fixture – but we know it'll be a meteoric task.

"It's a wonderful game, and one that we'll be bold and brave in."

NO LET-UP IN HOWE'S TOON CUP DREAMS

Newcastle v Bournemouth

FA Cup: Third round, KO 3pm

BY **LEE RYDER**

EDDIE HOWE aims to keep the magic of the FA Cup alive on Tyneside – despite having to juggle a congested and gruelling fixture list.

The competition still means a lot in Newcastle and Howe (top) accepts that he has a responsibility to keep dreams alive of a first trophy lift in this competition since 1955, when the great Jackie Milburn (circle) led the line for the Magpies.

Howe said: "We will try to pick a very strong team while trusting the squad. That is my best answer to that.

"In no way will be try to do anything other than try to win the game and get through."

Howe guided Newcastle to their first trophy win since 1969 when they won the Carabao Cup last season. In a busy week that sees them face Bournemouth up before taking on Manchester City in the Carabao Cup semi-final first leg, something may have to give.

Aaron Ramsdale, Kieran Trippier, Alex Murphy, Joe Willock and Jacob Ramsey could all be set for roles in Howe's squad rotation.

Howe said: "For whatever reason, we haven't quite matched the success (in the FA Cup) we've had in the Carabao Cup – that's a frustration.

"The early rounds are the most difficult because we're surrounded by loads of other games, and we really need to make sure that we focus on this one because want to progress."

FLETCHER IS IN THE DARK

Manchester Utd v Brighton

FA Cup: Third round, tomorrow 4.30pm

DARREN FLETCHER admits he does not know if he will be asked to stay on as a first-team coach after tomorrow.

United are in talks with Ole Gunnar Solskjaer and Michael Carrick over taking charge until the summer, which could mean Fletcher is back in his role as Under-18s head coach next week.

His contact has been with CEO Omar Berrada and director of football Jason Wilcox, rather than co-owner Sir Jim Ratcliffe, and he insisted his attention is all on the Brighton game. "I speak to Omar and Jason," he said. "I've been focusing on the job in hand."

UPBEAT SIGNS Saka (left) in action

SAKA DEAL WILL RUN UNTIL 2031

PORTSMOUTH v ARSENAL

FA Cup: Tomorrow, kick-off 2pm

FROM BACK PAGE
which would run at the Emirates until June 2031.

Arsenal chiefs and the academy graduate's representatives are in the process of finalising the agreement before making the official announcement.

Saka will follow teammates William Saliba, Gabriel Magalhaes, Ethan Nwaneri and Myles Lewis-Skelly in extending their stays at the club in recent months.

He has won just a single major trophy with Arsenal, the 2020 FA Cup, shortly after his breakthrough into the first-team.

But now, with Saka a vice-captain, Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta views the 24-year-old forward as one of the most important members of his squad, on and off the pitch.

Arteta was asked in November why he was so relaxed about Saka's future at the club.

"I prefer that word, I think it is 'confidence'," the Gunners boss said. "What Bukayo has transmitted to me and the club – and Emeka [Obasi, Saka's agent] as well – is that they want to continue to be here.

"It's a very healthy, powerful relationship.

"The journey Bukayo has had at the club and what he has become is something we want to maintain. That is something that is going to leave a legacy at this club and he needs to fulfil that role."

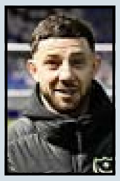
Last April, Saka had publicly reiterated his desire to stay with the club.

He said then: "I think it is pretty clear – the fans know how much I love them and I think they love me back, so it is a good relationship.

"I am really happy to be here and I'm just focused on winning.

"I don't think anyone is in a rush. I have got two years left on my contract so it is pretty relaxed.

"Everyone knows my thoughts and I've let you [press] guys know as well so I don't think there's any rush really."



FIRING CHAPLIN CAN SINK GUNS

CONOR CHAPLIN has been backed to end the worst goal drought of his career as Portsmouth go gunning for Arsenal.

The Ipswich loanee, a product of the Pompey academy, has failed to find the back of the net for 13 months.

Chaplin (above) returned to the South Coast for a second spell in September but has been utilised in a less familiar wide-right role.

He has struggled for goals, despite bagging more than 100 in a 12-season career.

It's 19 appearances for Pompey and 33 in all since he last featured on the scoresheet in a 2-1 Premier League defeat for the Tractor Boys against Bournemouth at the start of December 2024.

Rediscovering his shooting boots against the Premier League leaders at a sold-out Fratton Park tomorrow would be the ideal way to launch the second half of his loan.

Pompey boss John Mousinho said: "There's loads to come from Chappers.

"He's given us a huge amount in terms of what he's done as a leader.

"Now adding goals and assists to his game will take it to the next level for us."

FAMILIAR

MAN CITY v EXETER

FA Cup: Third Round, KO 3pm

Francis excited to face Phil in reunion of boys in Sky Blue

EXCLUSIVE
BY **ALEX JAMES**

ED FRANCIS first came across Phil Foden when the two football-mad kids were five-year-olds taking their baby steps in the game.

More than 20 years on, the pair will reunite at the Etihad today in a storyline that maybe only the FA Cup can write.

Francis and Foden were teammates for more than a decade, rising through the ranks at a changing club on the charge.

Foden was the diminutive, skilful playmaker with his talent clear for all to see, Francis the ball-playing defender already displaying the character and leadership abilities that have seen him forge a successful playing career.

They went to school together within the City system, trained together, played together and hung out together. When City reached the 2017 FA Youth Cup final, Francis was the captain and Foden the star in the making.

Their football journeys have differed since, but Francis is relishing the chance to come up against his mate today.

"He'll probably forget who I am," joked the Exeter man.

"I got on with him well and spent a lot of time together. We don't speak regularly, but I am sure he'll recognise me and it will be nice to play against him, if he does play. I hope he does so I can get one of his shirts. I'll message him and see if he can sort me one or two out!"

Even at a young age Francis recalls Foden's desire and determination to make it. "He was never bothered about school, he was just obsessed with football," he said.

"He was football-mad, we all were, but he had an extra level from a young age.

"I think he got to 16/17 and went on a pre-season tour and he was the only academy one who went.

"He played against United and (Paul) Pogba and there is a picture of him where he is up to Pogba's waist. But Phil did really well and you did think, 'If he can do it, we can do it'."

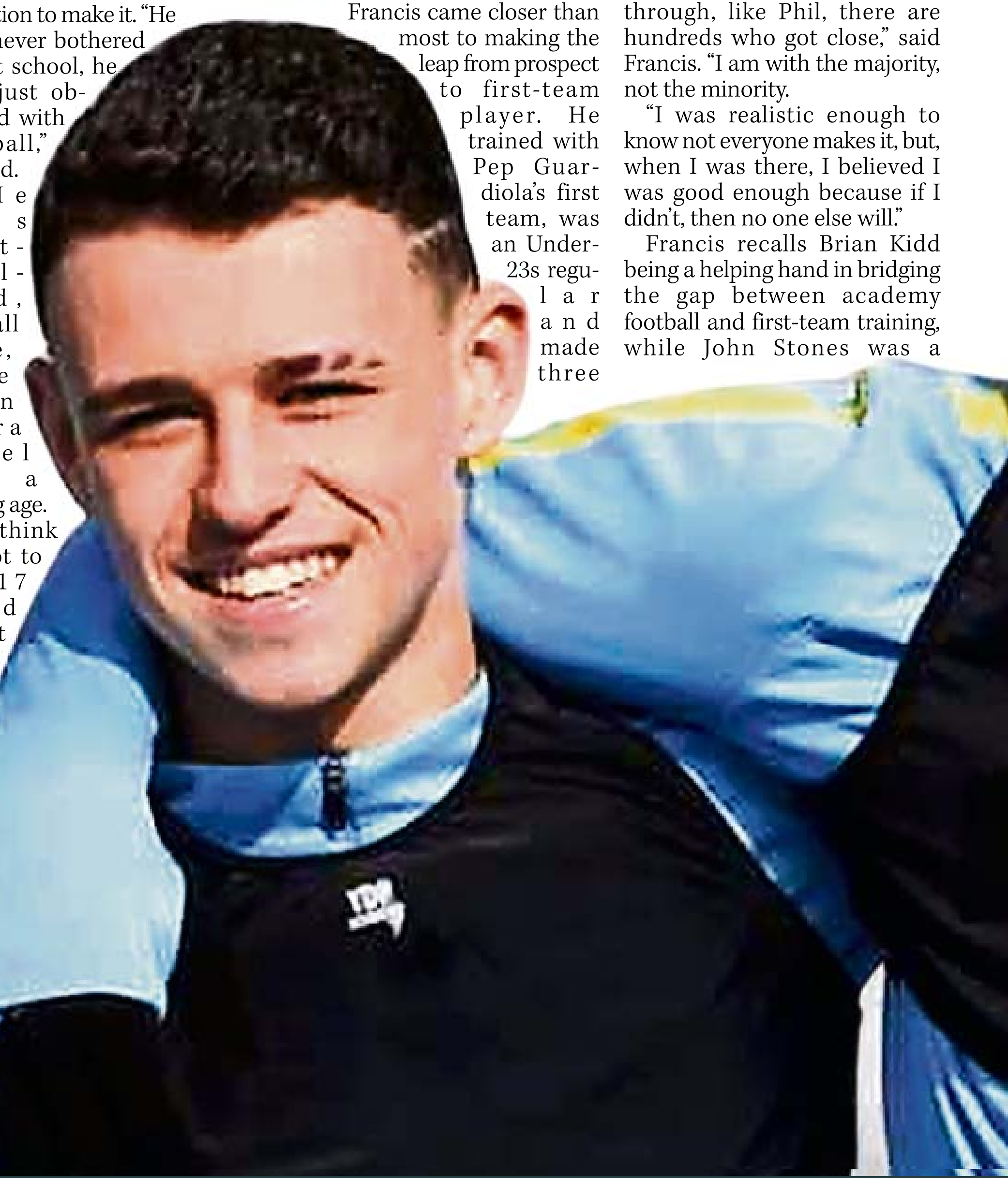
Francis came closer than most to making the leap from prospect to first-team player. He trained with Pep Guardiola's first team, was an Under-23s regular and made three appearances for City in the Football League Trophy.

In the end, the breakthrough didn't come. Francis wanted senior football sooner rather than later and understood the talent in front of him at the Etihad.

"For every kid that got through, like Phil, there are hundreds who got close," said Francis. "I am with the majority, not the minority.

"I was realistic enough to know not everyone makes it, but, when I was there, I believed I was good enough because if I didn't, then no one else will."

Francis recalls Brian Kidd being a helping hand in bridging the gap between academy football and first-team training, while John Stones was a



BY THE NUMBERS

APPEARANCES IN ALL COMPS

PHIL FODEN

2016-2026 - Manchester City	346

ED FRANCIS

2018-2019 - Manchester City	3
2018 - Jong Almere City (loan)	8
2019 - Almere City (loan)	3
2019-2020 - Wolves	(2)
2019 - Grasshopper (loan)	0
2020-21 - Harrogate	20
2021-23 - Notts County	44
2022 - Gateshead (loan)	14
2023-24 - Gateshead	42
2024-2026 - Exeter	53

Pic: SmartFrame/Manchester City FC

SEMENYO HAS EX FACTOR

FROM BACK PAGE
said the City boss. "I don't know if he will start but he will be selected because we don't have many players."

Guardiola revealed City have been tracking Semenyo (left, with director of football Hugo Viana) for years and he is delighted the Ghana star chose to join their team amid stiff competition for his signature.

"We followed him for a long time and in the end with the situation we have up front with the wingers – we have three specific players in Oscar [Bobb], Savinho and Jeremy [Doku] – we need to reinforce for the next years and that's why the club made the effort to take him," said Guardiola. "He is the perfect age at 25 with the best years to come.

"The club likes to try to bring young players to make his career with his best years here.

"Everybody knows the qualities. They are extraordinary at Bournemouth and he can play on both sides.

FODEN

welcoming figure and Raheem Sterling took the time to compliment and advise Francis during sessions.

He added "I remember being in a meeting one of the first times I went up to the seniors.

"I was sat with Yaya Toure and Vincent Kompany, and when Pep walked in I was starstruck, it was just 'Wow'.

"That upbringing to me was just normal, but most kids don't get that and the values they instil in you from a young age are what you need.

"When you get close to the first team, you see how good they are, but also how bulletproof they are, they have a resilience and a mindset.

"Phil Foden had that from a young age, but not all lads do." Francis took the decision to move on, Wolves came calling and the pathway to their first team seemed clearer.

A Molineux breakthrough didn't arrive, though, and Francis dropped to League Two with Harrogate, then the National League with Notts County and Gateshead before joining Exeter in 2024.

"I've enjoyed my journey" said Francis.

"It has been tough at times. It is a really nice moment to go back to where I started."

SWAPPING SHIRTS Francis and Foden now and (inset) the 2017 FA Youth Cup side featuring them both

THAT PEP'S BEEN LOOKING TO FIND

He can play as a striker as well with his pace. He knows the Premier League. Many clubs wanted him and he decided to join us. All I can say is thanks to him.

"We are very pleased for the next few years."

Revealing why he picked City ahead of Premier League rivals Manchester United, Liverpool and Chelsea, Semenyo said: "I've still got a lot of learning to do and joining City is going to be the best thing for my development.

"The best coaches, the best players will take my game to the next level.

"I feel I'm improving, but there are so many young players here who I think will be top players. I want to be part of that, and I want to rewrite history again.

"I'm so proud to have joined.

"I've watched City over the last decade under Pep, and they've been the dominant team in the Premier League, achieving amazing things in the Champions League, FA Cup and League Cup. They've set the highest of standards, a club with world-class players, world-class facilities, one of the greatest managers ever.

"I have so much scope for improvement, so to be at this club at this stage of my career is perfect.

"It's a real privilege. My best football is yet to come, I'm sure."

12X GUIDE

TODAY

(3pm unless stated)

Africa Cup Of Nations Quarter-Final

Algeria v Nigeria (4pm)
Egypt v Ivory Coast (7pm)

The Emirates FA Cup Third Round

Boreham Wood v Burton
1 Bristol City v Watford (5.45pm)
2 Burnley v Millwall
3 Cambridge U v Birmingham (5.45pm)
4 Charlton v Chelsea (8pm)
(Live on TNT Sports 1)
5 Cheltenham v Leicester (12.15pm)
Doncaster v Southampton
7 Everton v Sunderland (12.15pm)
8 Fulham v Middlesbrough
Grimsby v Weston-S-Mare (5.45pm)
Ipswich v Blackpool
Macclesfield FC v C Palace (12.15pm)
(Live on BBC 1)
Manchester City v Exeter
11 Newcastle v AFC Bournemouth
Salford City v Swindon
15 Sheff Wed v Brentford
16 Stoke v Coventry
18 Tottenham v Aston Villa (5.45pm)
(Live on BBC 1)
20 Wolves v Shrewsbury (12.15pm)

Sky Bet League One

21 Bradford City v Rotherham
22 Leyton Orient v Cardiff
23 Luton v Stevenage (12.30pm)
24 Peterborough v Bolton
25 Stockport Co v Huddersfield (12.30pm)

Sky Bet League Two

26 Accrington Stanley v Barnet
27 Chesterfield v Colchester . **OFF/PANEL**
28 Crewe v Harrogate Tn
29 Oldham v Notts County. **OFF/PANEL**
30 Tranmere v Bromley

William Hill Scottish Premiership

32 Celtic v Dundee Utd
34 Hibernian v Motherwell
35 Livingston v Kilmarnock
36 St Mirren v Falkirk

William Hill Scottish Championship

37 Ayr v Airdrieonians
38 Morton v Dunfermline
39 Queen's Park v St Johnstone
40 Raith v Arbroath

William Hill Scottish League One

41 Alloa v Montrose
42 Cove Rangers v Inverness CT
43 Peterhead v Hamilton
44 Queen of South v Kelty Hearts
45 Stenhousemuir v East Fife

William Hill Scottish League Two

46 Annan Athletic v Elgin
47 Dumbarton v Clyde
48 East Kilbride v Spartans
49 Edinburgh City v Stirling
Forfar v Stranraer

Enterprise National Lge

Aldershot v Solihull Moors
Braintree Tn v Boston Utd (5.30pm)
Sutton v York
Woking v Hartlepool

FA Trophy—4th rnd: Bath C v Southend, Chatham Tn v Carlisle, Eastleigh v Southport, Ebbsfleet United v Forest Green, FC Halifax v Anstey Nomads, Hereford FC v AFC Fylde, Hornchurch v AFC Telford, Kidderminster v Morecambe, Leatherhead v Horsham, Marine v Gloucester, Scunthorpe v Clitheroe, Tamworth v Rochdale, Walton & Hersham v Brackley, Wealdstone v Dag & Red, Yeovil v Alvechurch.

Women's Super League

Arsenal v Man Utd (12.30pm)
(Live on Sky Sports Main Event)

Women's Championship: Southampton v Portsmouth.

TOMORROW

The Emirates FA Cup Third Round

6 Derby v Leeds (12noon)
(Live on TNT Sports 2)
9 Hull v Blackburn (2.30pm)
10 Man Utd v Brighton (4.30pm)
12 Norwich v Walsall (2.30pm)
13 Portsmouth v Arsenal (2pm)
(Live on TNT Sports 1)
14 Sheff Utd v Mansfield (2.30pm)
17 Swansea v West Brom (2.30pm)
19 West Ham v QPR (2.30pm)

William Hill Scottish Premiership

31 Aberdeen v Rangers (4.30pm)
(Live on Sky Sports Football)
33 Dundee v Hearts (2pm)
(Live on Sky Sports Football)

Women's Super League

Aston Villa v Brighton & Hove (12noon)
Chelsea v West Ham (12noon)
(Live on Sky Sports Mix)
Liverpool FC v London City (2.30pm)
Man City v Everton (12noon)
(Live on Sky Sports Premier League)
Tottenham v Leicester (12noon)

Women's Championship: Durham v Sunderland, Ipswich v Charlton, Newcastle v Birmingham City, Nottm Forest v Bristol City.

MONDAY

The Emirates FA Cup Third Round

Liverpool v Barnsley
(Live on TNT Sports 1)

Women's Championship: Sheff Utd v Crystal Palace.

INSIDE TODAY FREE £2 SHOP BET WITH William HILL VALID ON ALL SPORT 18+ ONLY. TERMS AND CONDITIONS APPLY. SEE P22 FOR DETAILS.

DAILY EXPRESS SPORT
express.co.uk/sport

STOKES TO 'SPEAK THE TRUTH'

BY **RORY DOLLARD** IN **SYDNEY**

BEN STOKES is ready to dish out some hard truths to England's Test team after accepting the shine has come off his reign as captain.

A 4-1 defeat in the Ashes, following a 2-2 draw at home to India, leaves Stokes (left) and England with little to show for a six-month period many felt would define the era. Big changes were made to build towards a goal that has been badly missed.

The likes of James Anderson, Jonny Bairstow, Ben Foakes and Jack Leach were moved on in favour of fresh blood in the form of Gus Atkinson, Brydon Carse, Jamie Smith and Shoaib Bashir. The overhaul has not changed English

TURN TO PAGE 75, COLUMN 2

Rosenior plea to sceptics at start of Blues reign

CHARLTON
V
CHELSEA
TONIGHT
KO: 8pm

INSPIRED ONE... Rosenior spoke about 'hero' Jose Mourinho ahead of first Chelsea game

BY **BOBBY VINCENT**

LIAM ROSENIOR is using Jose Mourinho as inspiration as the newly appointed Chelsea head coach looks to win over the fans.

Rosenior was appointed as Enzo Maresca's successor this week, in a move which raised eyebrows in some quarters.

But Rosenior has urged people to give him and his Chelsea squad a chance to prove themselves.

"Everybody starts somewhere," said the 41-year-old, who moved to Stamford Bridge from Strasbourg.

"There's a great quote from Mourinho. Mourinho is one of my heroes, I've studied him.

He said it took him 20 years to become an overnight success. It's

TURN TO PAGE 77, COLUMN 4

GIVE ME A CHANCE

SPURS BOSS STILL AIMING HIGH DESPITE FLAK FROM FANS: PAGE 76

ANT'S GOT EX FACTOR

Man City v **Exeter City**
Kick-off 3pm

BY **SIMON BAJKOWSKI**

PEP GUARDIOLA will throw Antoine Semenyo straight into Manchester City's squad for today's FA Cup tie.

Semenyo (below) completed his £62.5million move from Bournemouth yesterday.

Guardiola confirmed the winger will be involved against League One Exeter as City aim to bounce back from three successive draws in the Premier League. " He will be selected,"

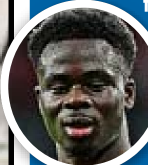
TURN TO PAGE 78, COLUMN 4

BUKAYO'S DONE DEAL

Portsmouth v **Arsenal**
Tomorrow, kick-off 2pm

BY **NATHAN RIDLEY**

BUKAYO SAKA has quashed any doubts over his future by agreeing a new five-year contract with Arsenal.



Saka (below) has entered the final 18 months of his current deal but talks over an extension were opened last year – and as long ago as April. Saka said: "I want to win wearing this badge."

The England star is now set to put pen to paper on a contract worth up to £300,000 a week,

TURN TO PAGE 78, COLUMN 1

DAILY EXPRESS Fever Pitch
YOUR FOOTBALL WEEKEND STARTS HERE
CUP ROMANCE IS PURE BLISS
FREE INSIDE

Published by Reach plc, One Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5AP. Registered in England & Wales No. 82548. Printed by Reach Printing Services at St Albans Rd, Watford, Hertfordshire WD24 7RG, Hollinwood Avenue, Chadderton, Oldham OL9 8EP, Interpress, 140 Duncrue Street, Belfast, BT3 9AQ., Miller Newsprint Ltd, Miller House, Triq L-Esportat-uri, Zone 2, Mriehel, Birkirkara CBD 2040, Malta, Milkro Digital Cyprus, Nissou Industrial Area, Old Nicosia, Limassol Road, 2571 Nissou, Cyprus, Milkro Hellas Publisher Services Ltd, 2nd Kilometer Peanias Markopoullou Ave.,Position Nisiza, 19441 Koropi, Greece.

Tel. 0208 612 7000. Outside UK +44(0) 208 612 7000

DX1ST 100126
9 770307 017667 02

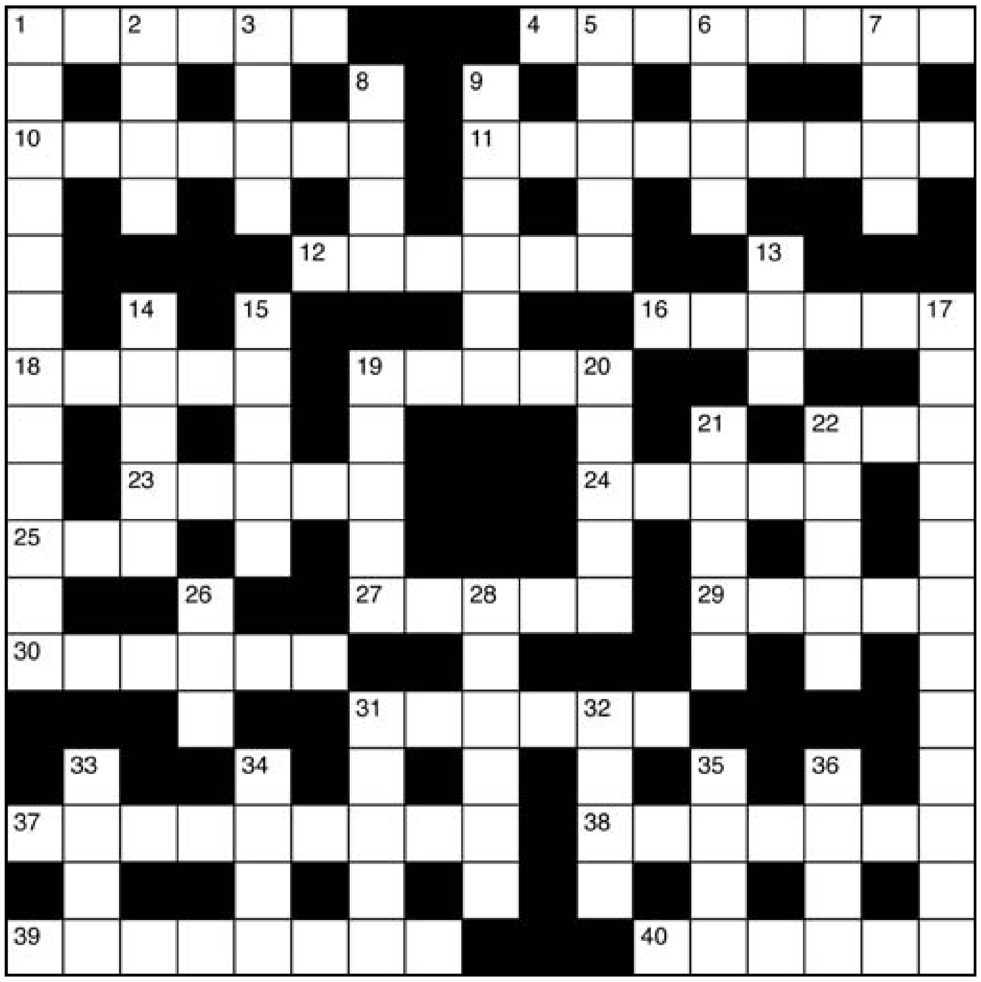
NEWSPAPERS SUPPORT RECYCLING
The recycled content of UK Newspapers in 2024 was 34.7%

DAILY EXPRESS

Puzzles EXTRA

Welcome to your brilliant Saturday Express eight-page puzzles pullout. We've got plenty here to keep you busy, from your favourite crosswords to brain-teasing sudokus and more. Enjoy!

ENTERTAINMENT CROSSWORD



ACROSS

1 Robson Green's one-time singing partner, _ Flynn (6)
4 Celebrity choreographer, Arlene _ (8)
10 _ Kerr, Victoria's Secret model previously married to Orlando Bloom (7)
11 Ms Aguilera, singer (9)
12 This Morning co-host, Dermot _'_ (1'5)
16 & 19 Total Eclipse Of The Heart singer (6,5)
18 Four Weddings And A Funeral actress, _ MacDowell (5)
19 See 16
22 Jude _, actor who stars in Black Rabbit (3)
23 English TV actress whose credits include Kingdom and dinnerladies, Celia _ (5)
24 Controversial film maker, Michael _ (5)
25 Put Your Records On singer, Corinne Bailey _ (3)
27 Zac _, The Iron Claw actor (5)
29 Bend it Like Beckham and ER actress Parminder _ (5)
30 Irish member of Girls Aloud, _ Coyle (6)
31 Star of the Home Alone films, Macaulay _ (6)
37 She played Pamela Landy in the Bourne movies (4,5)
38 Broadcaster and former footballer, Gary _ (7)
39 Actress and filmmaker, _ Jolie (8)
40 _ Bond, used to be BBC Royal Correspondent (6)

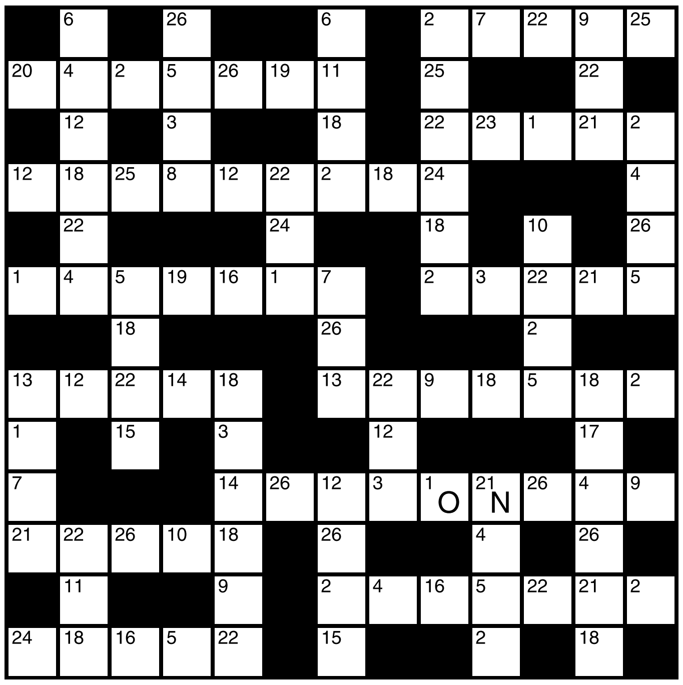
DOWN

1 Director the Avatar film series (5,7)
2 Northern Irish professional golfer, _ McIlroy (4)
3 Ms Suvari, famed for her roles in American Pie and American Beauty (4)
5 _ Styles, Watermelon Sugar singer (5)
6 Blackpink singer who released the album Alter Ego (4)
7 Performing name of Alecia Beth Moore (4)
8 Singer who often teams up with Alfie Boe, Michael _ (4)
9 Davina _, Long Lost Family co-presenter (6)
13 Former Scissor Sisters' vocalist, _ Matronic (3)
14 Bill _, naturalist and one of The Goodies (5)
15 Former tennis player, _ Kvitova (5)
17 Ex-Conservative MP turned novelist (6,6)
19 Burlesque artiste, Dita Von _ (5)
20 _ Kemp, TV and radio presenter (5)
21 Gavin in Gavin and Stacey, Mathew _ (5)
22 Keith Lemon's creator, _ Francis (5)
26 _ Wasikowska, Australian actress (3)
28 French fashion designer, _ Mouret (6)
31 Irish actor, _ Farrell (5)
32 Monty Python member, Eric _ (4)
33 Welsh star of the Fantastic Four movies, _ Gruffudd (4)
34 Jimmy _, Geordie actor and musician (4)
35 Riot Women actress, _ Reid (4)
36 Senegalese artist whose first album was Trouble (4)

CODEWORD

The number in each square corresponds to a letter. Work out the words in the grid using the letters provided. Fill in these known letters first, then use skill and judgement to work out the others.

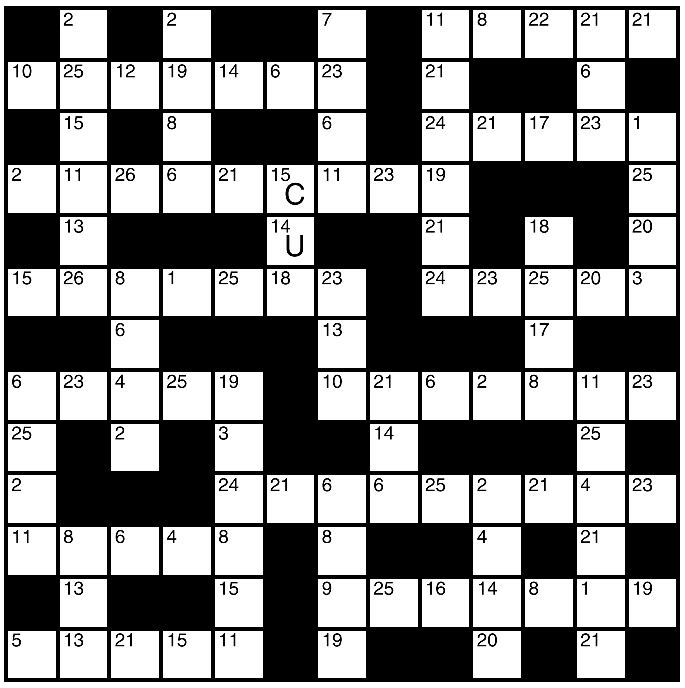
1



A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
O												
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
							N					

2



A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
U	C											

SAMURAI SUDOKU

Normal sudoku rules apply for all five 9x9 sudokus, but the 9x9 inner sudoku shares four of its 3x3 boxes with those of the outside sudokus.

1				8		9	7						8	5		6				3
			2	5	9										8	4	3			
				1		3		8				3		7		5				
	9			7			1						4			3			7	
4	2	1	8			6								3			4	2	8	6
	7					2		9				9		2					4	
6		3		2	8					2					5	1		6		4
7			9						1		9						7			9
		4			1				4		3				4			8		
							6	7				5	4							
						9								2						
							3	2				9	7							
		3			4				3		8				5			3		
2			5						5		7						1			7
6		5		2	1					9					3	8		9		4
	2					9		1				3		1					4	
4	1	7	3			8								8			6	5	3	9
	9			8			5						6			3			1	
				9		4		3				9		2		4				
			2	1	6										1	2	3			
7				4		1	6						3	4		7				8

EASY SUDOKU 1

		2	5			6	7	
	1				7		3	
	8	6	1		2			9
5				2	9			4
	9						8	
		7	3	5		9		2
6					3	4	5	
	7		6	4			2	
	5	4		7	1			6

HARD SUDOKU 1

			9	7		5		3
							8	
3	9				1			
5	3			4			7	
		2				8		
	7			9			3	1
			3				9	6
	6							
4		9		2	8			

NUMBERFIT 1

NUMBERFIT 2

Use logic to fit the listed numbers below into the corresponding grid.

		■				■	■	
							■	
	■		■		■			
				■				
			■		■		■	
	■							
	■	■				■		

2 digits: 26 55 62 95
3 digits: 266 350 352 355 525 595 662 952 953 956
4 digits: 5225 2556 2992 2995
5 digits: 22926 63522
7 digits: 5623266 6393269
9 digits: 505265929 525055929 525929335 525959225

■								■
	■			■			■	
			■	■	■			
				■				
				■				
			■	■	■			
	■			■			■	
■								■

2 digits: 22 25 27 34 42 43 72 74
3 digits: 262 264 462 546 565 915
4 digits: 2845 5182 5819 6485
5 digits: 68286 68586
7 digits: 1377334 1455224 4223551 4334771
9 digits: 322124473 322154557 522144553

ALPHADOKU 1

A 9 x 9 sudoku with the letters R to Z.

				Y				
	S				R			
T		U	X			W		
		T		U				
					S			
W	U			X		Z	R	
R		V						T
		W	S	T	Y	U		

EASY SUDOKU 2

	9	1				5	4	
4			5	8	1			2
7				9				8
	1		2		9		6	
	7	6				3	2	
	4		3		5		8	
1				5				4
2			8	1	4			7
	5	4				8	1	

HARD SUDOKU 2

6		1						3
				2			4	
7		5		9	3			
			5			1		
	5	6				2	7	
		2			4			
			2	4		3		1
	8			6				
1						7		6

ALPHADOKU 2

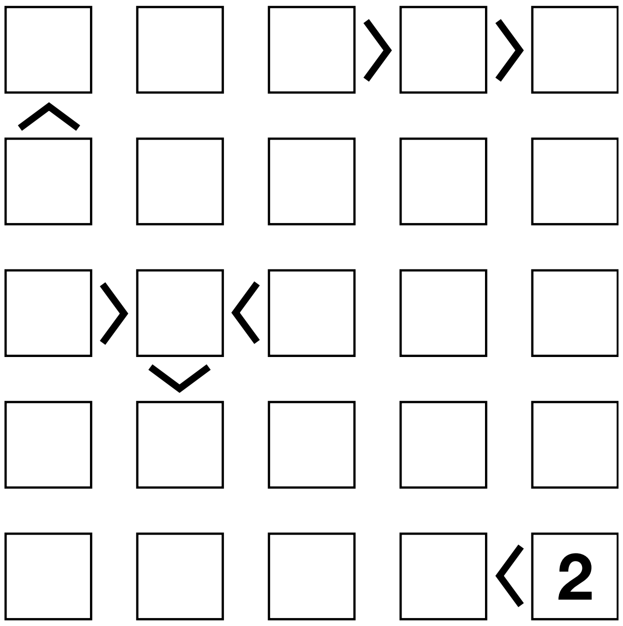
A 9 x 9 sudoku with the letters R to Z.

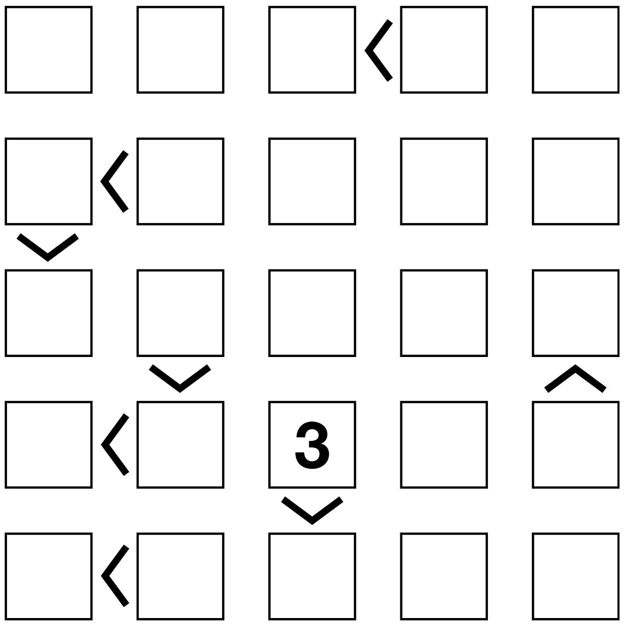
					W		X	
		W	Z		V		R	
R						W		
							S	
		R	S		Y		W	
	V				X			Z
		T				R	Z	
				Y		X	T	
		U		X				S

FUTOSHIKI 1

FUTOSHIKI 2

Insert the numbers one to five in each row and each column, making sure that no number is repeated. The only symbols to guide you are the "greater than" (>) and "less than" (<) signs.

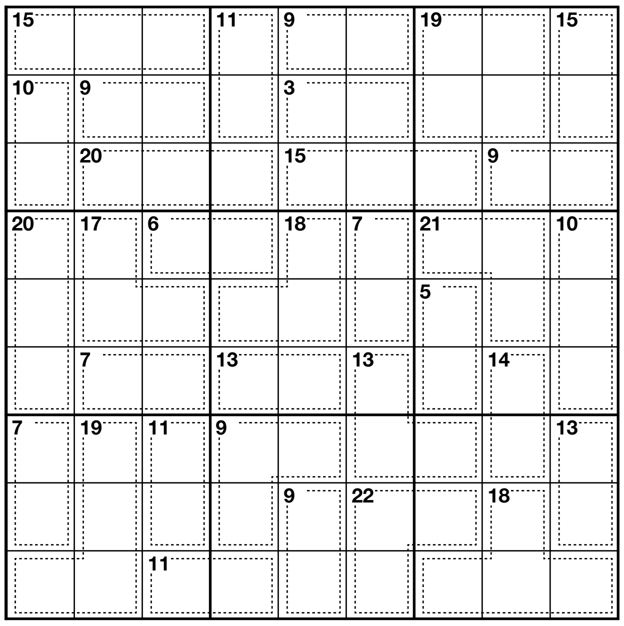


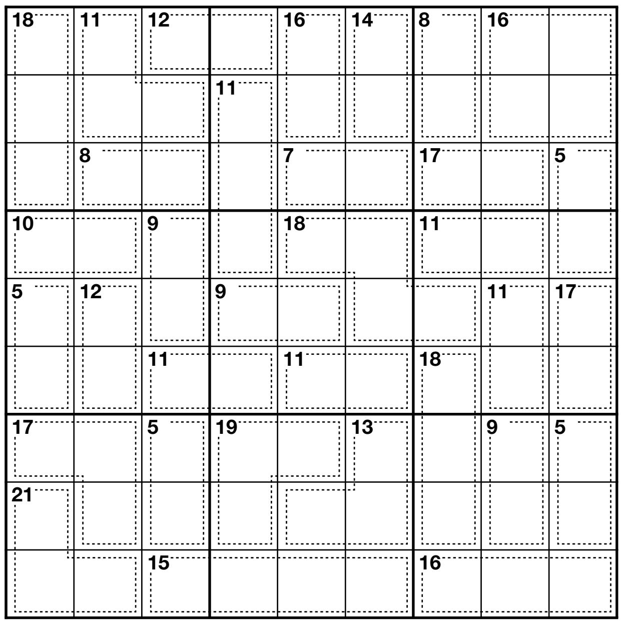


KILLER SUDOKU 1

KILLER SUDOKU 2

Each row and column hold the numbers 1 to 9 and the numbers in the cages must add to the given total. No number can be repeated in a cage.

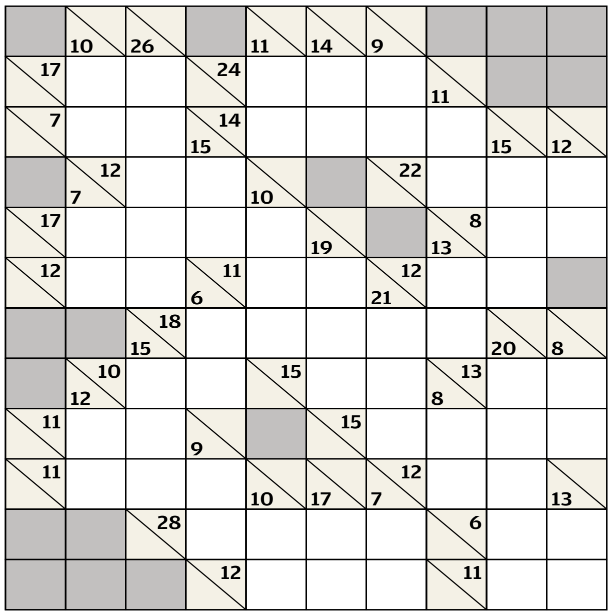

15
11
9
19
15
10
9
3
20
15
9
20
17
6
18
7
21
10
5
7
13
13
14
7
19
11
9
13
9
22
18
11

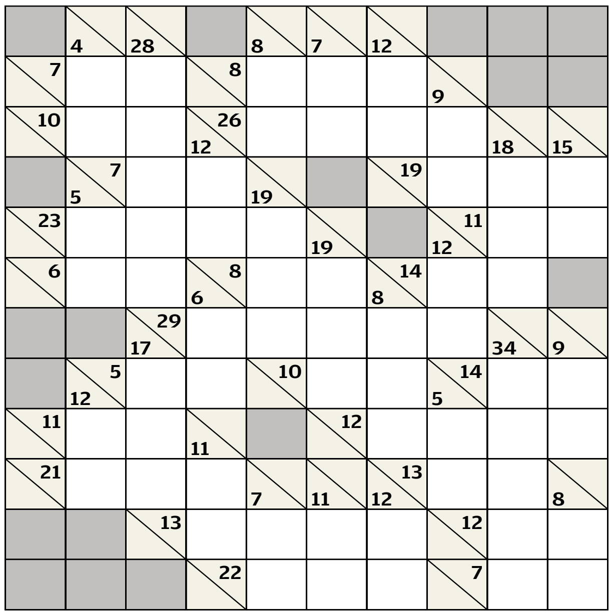

18
11
12
16
14
8
16
11
8
7
17
5
10
9
18
11
5
12
9
11
17
11
11
18
17
5
19
13
9
5
21
15
16

KAKURO 1

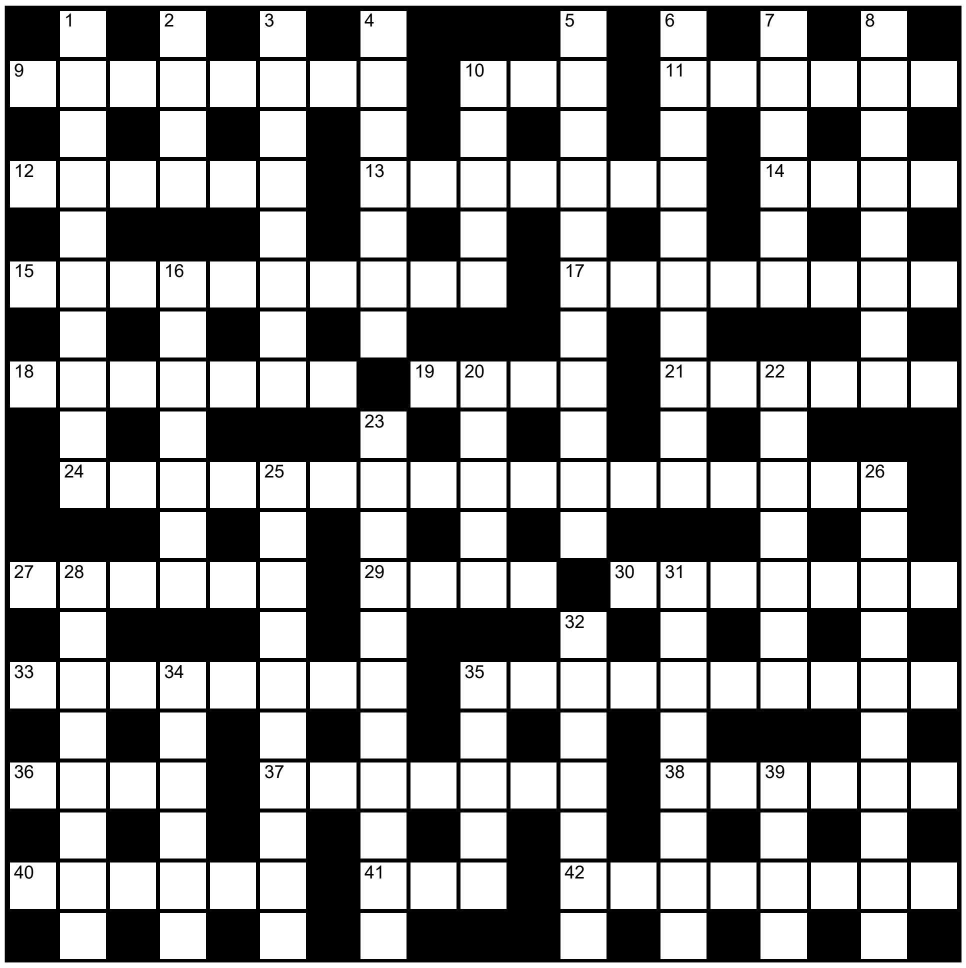
KAKURO 2

Fill in each series of blank squares using the numbers 1 to 9. Each series – across and down – must add up to the number in the shaded box at the beginning or top of the series. A number may be repeated in each line but not in a series.


10
26
11
14
9
17
24
11
7
14
15
15
12
12
7
10
22
17
19
8
13
12
11
6
12
21
18
15
20
8
10
12
15
13
8
11
9
15
11
10
17
12
7
13
28
6
12
11


4
28
8
7
12
7
8
9
10
26
12
18
15
7
5
19
19
23
19
11
12
6
8
6
14
8
29
17
34
9
5
12
10
14
5
11
11
12
21
7
11
13
12
8
13
12
22
7

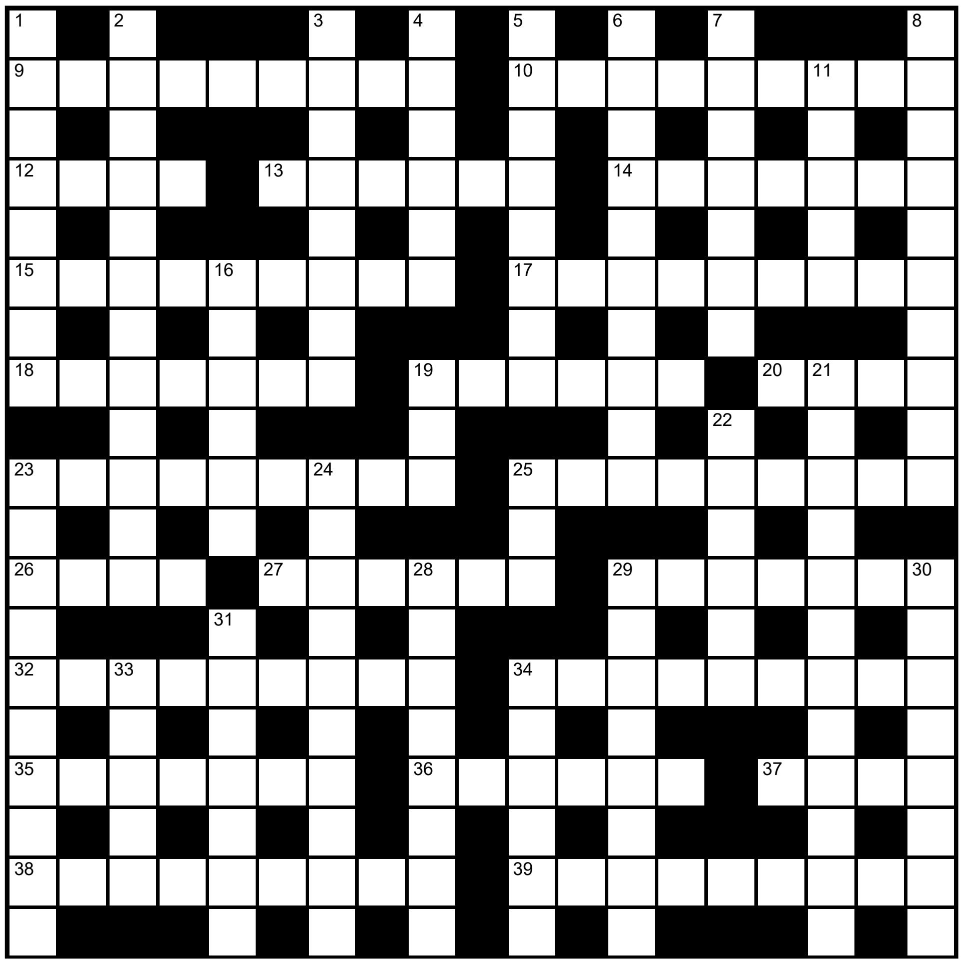
BIG CROSSWORD 1



ACROSS
9 Cabbage salad (8)
10 Tin (3)
11 Verbally (6)
12 Type of fruit acid (6)
13 Ogling (7)
14 Mislaid (4)
15 Rowdy (10)
17 Pinpoint (8)
18 Bent (7)
19 Operatic song (4)
21 Cultivatable (6)
24 Boxing category (5,12)
27 Haphazard (6)
29 Pay attention to (4)
30 Yells (7)
33 Habituate (8)
35 Estate (10)
36 Hold (4)
37 Angry fit (7)
38 Larder (6)
40 Hi-fi (6)
41 Slippery fish (3)
42 Bleaching agent (8)

DOWN
1 Flat (10)
2 Dread (4)
3 Facial injury (5,3)
4 Bird (7)
5 Foreseen (11)
6 Assemble (10)
7 Vote (6)
8 Ecstatic (8)
10 Board game (5)
16 Cadged (7)
20 Crest (5)
22 Increase (7)
23 Sane (5-6)
25 Bait (10)
26 Percussion instrument (10)
28 Correct (8)
31 Slingshot (8)
32 Canvas bed (7)
34 Referee (6)
35 Danger (5)
39 Average (4)

BIG CROSSWORD 2



ACROSS
9 Usually (9)
10 Fruit (9)
12 Seven days (4)
13 Sacred beetle (6)
14 Artist's studio (7)
15 Badly arranged or matched (3-6)
17 Conquers (9)
18 Gets free (7)
19 Roam (6)
20 Abominable snowman (4)
23 Wide street or promenade (9)
25 Robot (9)
26 Not hot (4)
27 Osculates (6)
29 Defile (7)
32 Mafia boss (9)
34 Huge election win (9)
35 Hospital worker (7)
36 Term of office (6)
37 Continent (4)
38 A surgical treatment (9)
39 Large luxurious car (9)

DOWN
1 Albumen (3,5)
2 Highly intelligent person (12)
3 Pacifies (8)
4 Crossbreed (6)
5 Obstinate (8)
6 Betrothal (10)
7 Protection (7)
8 Economic slump (10)
11 Parlance (5)
16 Fish hawk (6)
19 Roll of banknotes (3)
21 Keen (12)
22 Stinks (6)
23 Board game (10)
24 Branch of maths (10)
25 Donkey (3)
28 Close examination (8)
29 Wide or complete view (8)
30 Inflated, lofty (8)
31 Metropolis (7)
33 Sidestep (5)
34 Needing company (6)

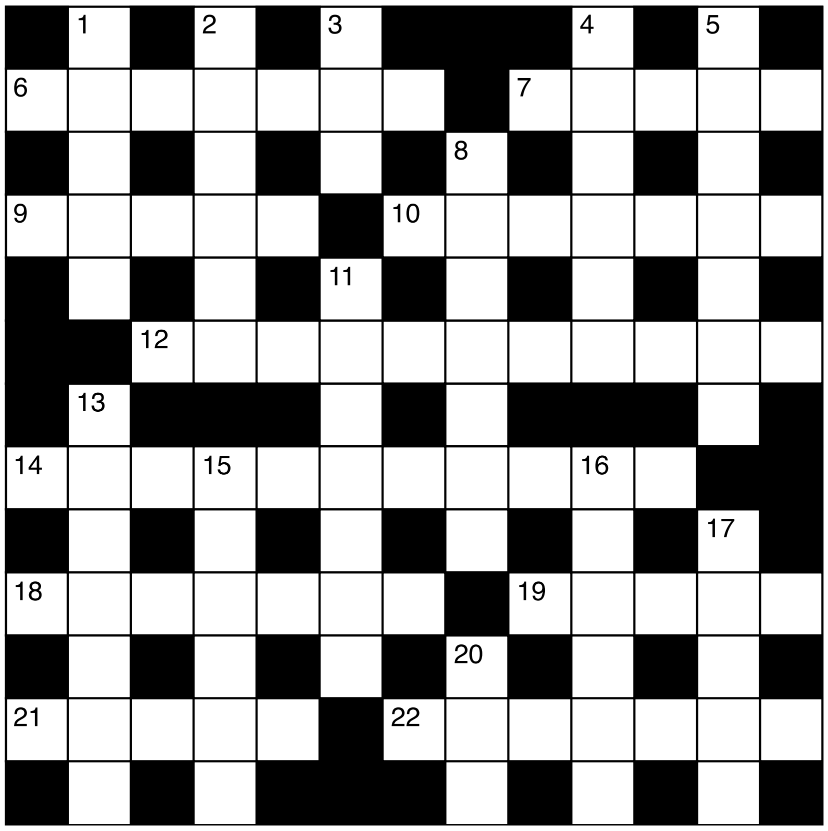
TWO-SPEED CROSSWORD

This two-speed crossword has two sets of clues, but just one grid

CRYPTIC CLUES

ACROSS
6. Late tributes to somebody coming from the wars! (7)
7 & 9Ac. Could they be the barriers between political factions? (5,5)
9. See 7 Across
10. Daily record at the sawmill? (3,4)
12. Someone with unbelievable relations! (11)
14. One displaying an advertisement for William's watch (4,7)
18. Strike another match (7)
19. Could possibly be synonymous with power (5)
21. Young attendants used by bookmakers (5)
22. One who will produce hand-made predictions (7)

DOWN
1. Put your weight on a rung of the ladder (5)
2. Plaque that shows a different battle (6)
3. No-one who is brazen will be cast! (3)
4. A jagged point will get the Spanish fish (6)
5. Swimming movements for oarsmen! (7)
8 & 20Dn. Get in touch with the fellow – he's an intermediary (7,3)
11. See 17 Down
13. According to the letter, it's illuminated with real variation (7)
15. One conducting the German songs we hear (6)
16. This is quite a problem – give me a gin well mixed (6)
17 & 11Dn. Could they be authors of 'The Wraith' and 'The Phantom Spirit'? (12)
20. See 8 Down

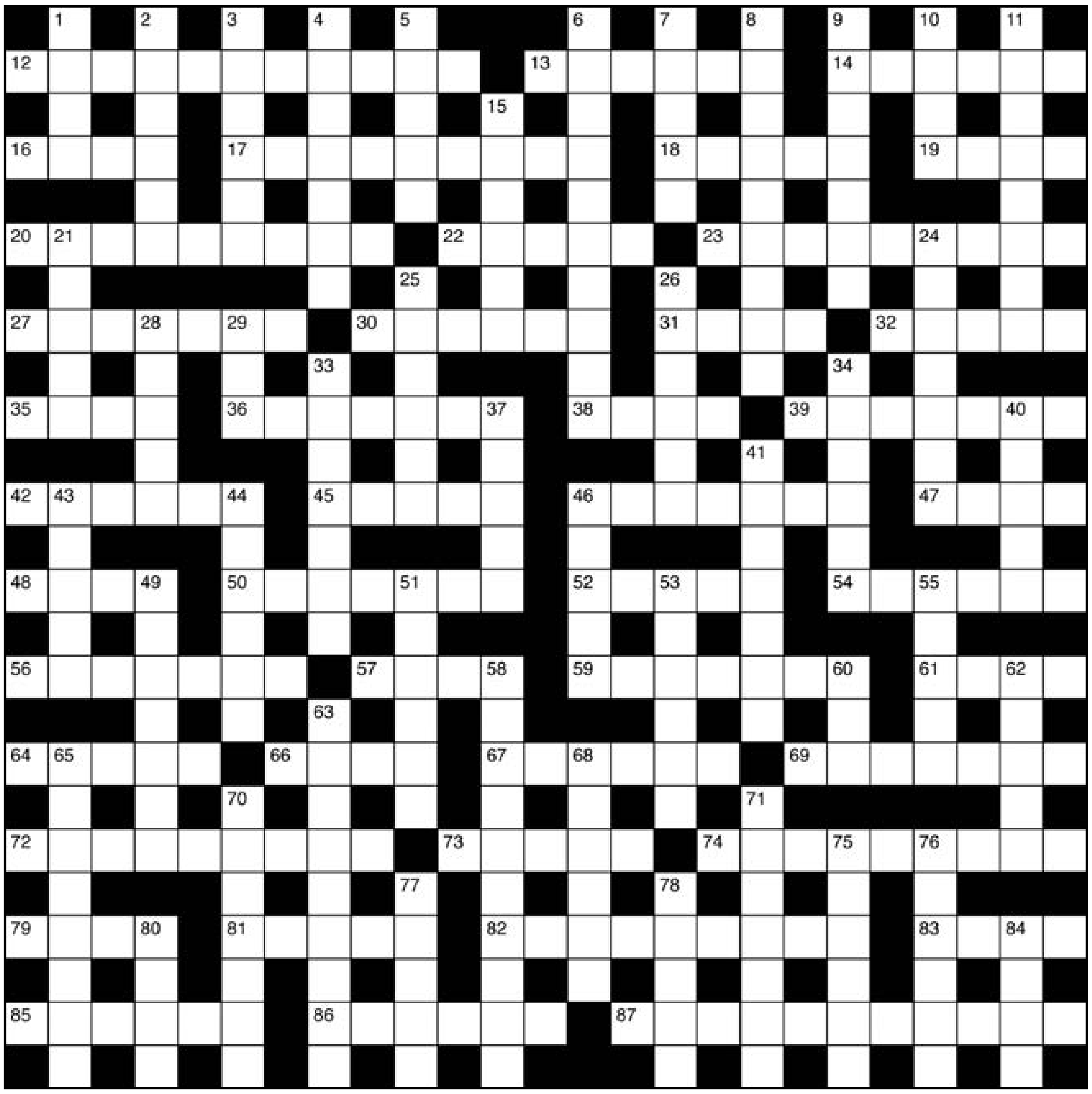


QUICK CLUES

ACROSS
6. Garlands (7)
7. Celebration (5)
9. Barriers (5)
10. Ship's official record (3,4)
12. Narrator (11)
14. Advertisement paster (4,7)
18. Wed again (7)
19. Force (5)
21. Leaves (5)
22. Chiromancer (7)

DOWN
1. Grooved tyre surface (5)
2. Pill (6)
3. Reserved (3)
4. Fish bristle (6)
5. Caresses (7)
8. Touch (7)
11. Authors (7)
13. Prosaic (7)
15. Ruler (6)
16. Mystery (6)
17. Spectre (5)
20. Chap (3)

JUMBO CROSSWORD


1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65
66
67
68
69
70
71
72
73
74
75
76
77
78
79
80
81
82
83
84
85
86
87

ACROSS

12. Deflecting (7,4)
13. Crumple (6)
14. Cat (6)
16. Otherwise (4)
17. Dying (9)
18. Go off (5)
19. Man's name (4)
20. Easily (5,4)
22. Laziness (5)
23. Leaving (9)
27. Show (7)
30. Brace (6)
31. Row (4)
32. Attempted (5)
35. Awaken (4)
36. Located (3,4)
38. Support (4)
39. Gossip (7)
42. Rate (6)
45. Melodies (5)
46. Mean (7)
47. Just (4)
48. Stream (4)
50. Airily (7)
52. Fastener (5)
54. Struck (6)
56. Part (7)
57. Aim (4)
59. A few (7)
61. Wobble (4)
64. Flattens (5)
66. Only (4)
67. Marked (6)
69. Answer (7)
72. Circumvents (4,5)
73. Cash (5)
74. Guided (9)
79. Halt (4)
81. Sound (5)
82. There (2,3,4)
83. Notch (4)
85. Opened (6)
86. Flies (6)
87. Champions (6,2,3)

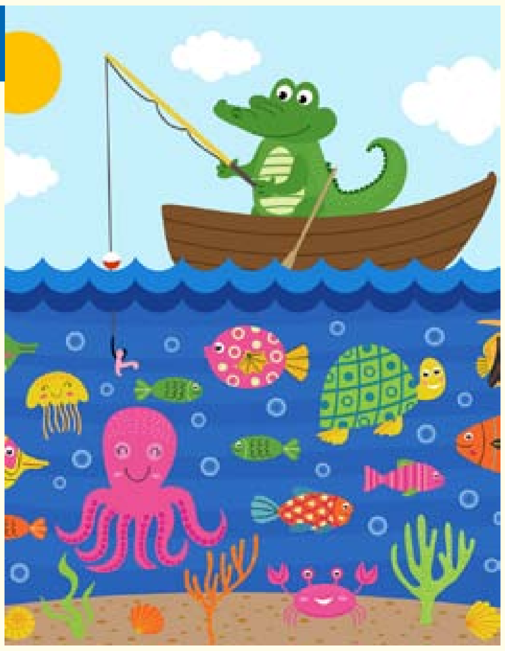
DOWN

1. Yank (4)
2. Propose (6)
3. Shot (6)
4. Vegetables (7)
5. Wild flower (5)
6. Intelligence (10)
7. Devil (5)
8. Even (4,5)
9. Anticipated (7)
10. Crooked (4)
11. Refrained (8)
15. Stimulus (6)
21. Roughly (5)
24. Disgust (4,3)
25. Decline (2,4)
26. Tax (6)
28. Figure (5)
29. Look (3)
33. Acting (2,5)
34. Wonderful (6)
37. Unpleasant (5)
40. Grow (5)
41. Cheeky (7)
43. Crept (5)
44. Bar (6)
46. Luggage (5)
49. Babies' playthings (7)
51. Rung (6)
53. Notice (6)
55. Fight (5)
58. Never mind (3,2,5)
60. Position (3)
62. Boat (5)
63. Utter (9)
65. Hint (8)
68. Make (6)
70. Cad (7)
71. Agreement (7)
75. Abhor (6)
76. Titbit (6)
77. Do (5)
78. Relaxes (5)
80. Unsatisfactory (4)
84. Self-possessed (4)

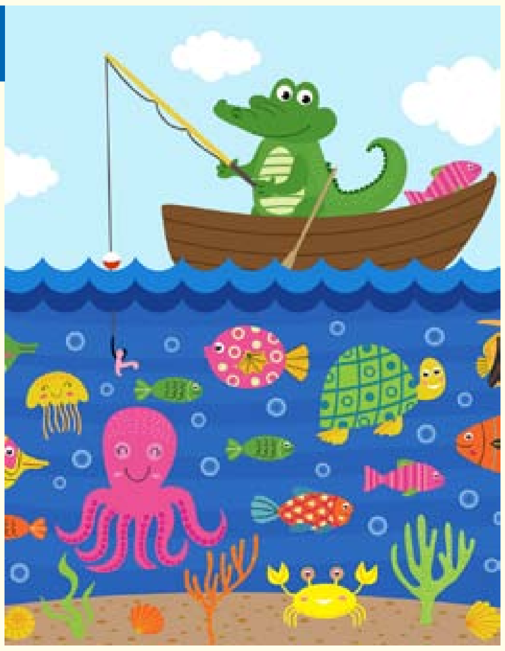
SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

Can you spot the six differences between these two pictures?

A



B



NUMBERCRUNCH

Follow the instructions from left to right, starting with the number given to reach an answer at the end of the row

BEGINNER 73	-17	50% of this	+56	÷7	-3	×8	-45	2/3 of this	ANSWER
INTERMEDIATE 34	×8	+73	60% of this	-54	Reverse the digits	4/9 of this	+69	Take the square root	ANSWER
ADVANCED 8	×64	-28	8/11 of this	+43	Increase by 60%	-52	7/10 of this	-47	ANSWER

GIANT SUDOKU

Every row, every column and every 5 x 5 box must contain every digit from 1 to 9 and every letter from K to Z.

	K							Z			M	3	U		N		V	P						2
	7									L	P	R				T		M						S
L	O	M			7	5	N	9			Y	4			U			Z	K	T				
			V	2			W		8	5			S	O					4	Z				U
		6				U	S			N				2		3								
		2	5							X	N		P	Q			1			7			U	
3		Z							T			9			K		8			4				N
N		W	T	O				7											X	S		P	V	Z
			Y	L	Q	P		1		V	T	K				2	U		M		6	X		W
U		K	7	1	8	Y	Z	6				S		W	4		P	5			L	3		
		5					M	2	Z					K	R		L	U		X				
	S		X			W	8			Z		U					5	Y			1	6	3	L
7				8		N		Y	Q	M			T			Z	2	X				V		
				4	V	L			S		O		5	P	9					Y	M	2		K
				W			6	T		2	8	Y		L		K								
			Z	Q		K	3											N		U	Y	4		T
			1	X	Z	4	Y				K		3	7				L	6	P		W	5	
			3	Y				S	P			W			8		T	9				R	Q	
9	L	N	W	T	R			5	X	Y				S	P	U				1	K			V
	M			R			2			8			1	V	O	7								
			L	5			1	Q		3			R	8			O	4		M	U			
Z				M				W	L					4	7		3			R			8	
	T	X	U		2		7		R		W		6				S			V			L	5
R			8		N	Z	K			U	1			Y		M						9	6	3
S						X		3		Q				T	V	8					Z	7	2	

MEDIUM SUDOKU 1

	7		2			5		
			7				2	4
1	4	2	9	3		6		
	1	6			3	8		
					9			
		5	6			3	1	
		9		6	2	4		1
8	3				1			
			3		7		8	

VERY HARD SUDOKU 1

	7	2		6			9	
		5			1			
6			9					
5		1			6			3
				8				
8			2			6		5
					7			4
	5		6			3		
	2			9		8	6	

CROSS OUT 1

CROSS OUT 2

Cross out one of the two letters in each divided square to reveal a completed crossword grid.

S / P	W / R	I / A	D / X	S / E
R / L	▨	R / D	▨	N / E
A / I	G / S	E / A	G / N	T / E
R / N	▨	R / A	▨	P / R
S / T	Y / A	S / E	M / T	Y / S

S / J	O / P	A / I	N / T	T / S
E / F	▨	G / D	▨	U / H
T / F	E / H	E / A	S / I	T / R
S / T	▨	A / N	▨	B / N
Y / B	A / E	T / L	H / L	S / E

IMPOSSUDOKU 1

2	7			9				8
						7		
8		4		6			5	
					7	9	3	
5								7
	9	8	1					
	8			7		2		3
		5						
3				4			1	6

MEDIUM SUDOKU 2

	2	8		6		7		
		4			9			
1	3	6		4				8
	6	1			3	4		
	4						2	
		3	2		4	6	8	
				5		8	6	4
4			6			9		
				9		3	1	

VERY HARD SUDOKU 2

	3				1			6
		2				1		
	4			9		2	3	
	5				4			7
			3		6			
1			7				2	
	2	5		8			4	
		8				9		
4			1				6	

IMPOSSUDOKU 2

	9			3	2			
6		8			5			
	7			1		3		
							8	4
2		4				5		3
5	1							
		9		7			3	
			8			2		6
			3	2			5	

PATHFINDER 1

PATHFINDER 2

From the top corner, make a path of words linked to the theme. The trail goes through each letter once but never diagonally.

Explorers

A G O S P U C S M A O P O N E
M I V E G I C U B R C O L O E
E R Q C H E I C M U A D S T R
S E U A J L R H O L V I G E N
C T I E R A I S C R E D N S T
A R H R R L A T O P H L I H S
R E E N E T W A G O C I V A C
N H Y R C O A M A D S A V N K
A N H U S O K I F A M D S E L
N O S D E M L E E D U N O T E
C O N U L A J E R L A O N R D
T R A H P N N K I K N R F E I
E S R F I E E A R S O E G A N
E L T C E N S S D A R L L M A
N L A I D E B I C N F N A D N

Disney animated films

B A L A N T E O L N C S A G F
E T S D A H D B T I E S N O R
A U A D I C N R B R P T D R A
Y T E B N T E A T H E H E F N
A N D E E H E V E I N E N E K
C O T H L I L L I E I E W N D
A P L U C O N O U S N T F I I
H S E E R I K T A I O U D G N
O A S H G N R A T D E R O A L
N T A B A R S B I T O Y N T S
I D N U C S E L D O O Z E U O
N G I G S N C R E P I E M L L
E N F E L I E H O C A L R A U
M R O F I B E T C O A E D W C
O B T H E R A R O M N A O N A

WORDSEARCH 1

WORDSEARCH 2

Find 13 words in the left and 11 words in the right grid.

The Simpsons characters

B E M I L H O U S E
S M I T H E R S X S
Y T A L R H T N U R
T Q R G L Z Q O G E
S N L A G I O W T D
U O M I B I W B I N
R S I A S B E A T A
K L S I R A X L C L
R E M O H G V L H F
B N T N R I E I Y C

Boats

R T E G K N U J L Z
C R U I S E R M B C
D T C L I N E R Y U
O I O K G E P R R T
Q O N M R U R E J T
P B F G E E G B K E
W O H D H G K W B R
P T V W U Y W N G I
C G S L X S A R A O
D H K W E G R A B T

ARROWWORD 1

Indian monument (3,5)		Fortune-teller Perceive		Male sibling (abbr.)		Placards Belonging to us	
Donkey				Stick Facial feature			
Envious _ Sande, singer							
					Large piece of food		Ridicule
Southeast Asian person		Measure of speed (abbr.)				Travel over snow	
				Employ			
Narrow aperture		Descends					
				Clothes worn by a footballer			

ARROWWORD 2

Series of battles Beauty treatment		Edge Roman god of the sea		Sack fabric Urban settlement		Twelve months	
Send						Ask for forgiveness	
Wooden platform	Dutch cheese		Shred Exam				
					Police officer		Baking measure (abbr.)
Expected Large houses				Baby's bed			
Greeted				Energy, vigour			

SOLUTIONS

PAGE ONE

ENTERTAINMENT CROSSWORD

Across: 1 Jerome; 4 Phillips; 10 Miranda; 11 Christina; 12 O'leary; 16/19 Bonnie Tyler; 18 Andie; 22 Law; 23 Imrie; 24 Moore; 25 Rae; 27 Efron; 29 Nagra; 30 Nadine; 31 Culkin; 37 Joan Allen; 38 Lineker; 39 Angelina; 40 Jennie.

Down: 1 James Cameron; 2 Rory; 3 Mena; 5 Harry; 6 Lisa; 7 Pink; 8 Ball; 9 McCall; 13 Ana; 14 Oddie; 15 Petra; 17 Edwina Currie; 19 Teese; 20 Roman; 21 Horne; 22 Leigh; 26 Mia; 28 Roland; 31 Colin; 32 Idle; 33 Ioan; 34 Nail; 35 Anne; 36 Akon.

CODEWORD

1

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
O	S	C	U	T	B	W	H	M	V	Y	R	G
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
Z	K	L	Q	E	F	J	N	A	X	D	P	I

2

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
N	S	H	M	B	R	J	A	P	F	K	X	L
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
U	C	Q	V	D	T	G	O	Z	E	W	I	Y

PAGES TWO AND THREE:

SAMURAI SUDOKU

1	6	5	3	8	4	9	7	2				4	8	5	7	6	2	1	9	3
8	3	7	2	5	9	4	6	1				6	9	1	8	4	3	7	5	2
2	4	9	6	1	7	3	5	8				3	2	7	9	5	1	4	6	8
3	9	6	4	7	2	8	1	5				8	4	6	2	3	5	9	7	1
4	2	1	8	9	5	6	3	7				5	7	3	1	9	4	2	8	6
5	7	8	1	6	3	2	4	9				9	1	2	6	7	8	3	4	5
6	5	3	7	2	8	1	9	4	6	2	5	7	3	8	5	1	9	6	2	4
7	1	2	9	4	6	5	8	3	1	7	9	2	6	4	3	8	7	5	1	9
9	8	4	5	3	1	7	2	6	4	8	3	1	5	9	4	2	6	8	3	7
						8	6	7	9	3	2	5	4	1						
						9	5	1	7	4	6	3	8	2						
						4	3	2	8	5	1	9	7	6						
9	8	3	6	7	4	2	1	5	3	6	8	4	9	7	5	6	2	3	8	1
2	7	1	5	3	8	6	4	9	5	1	7	8	2	3	4	9	1	6	5	7
6	4	5	9	2	1	3	7	8	2	9	4	6	1	5	3	8	7	9	2	4
5	2	8	4	6	7	9	3	1				3	7	1	2	5	9	8	4	6
4	1	7	3	5	9	8	2	6				2	4	8	7	1	6	5	3	9
3	9	6	1	8	2	7	5	4				5	6	9	8	3	4	7	1	2
1	6	2	7	9	5	4	8	3				9	5	2	6	4	8	1	7	3
8	3	4	2	1	6	5	9	7				7	8	6	1	2	3	4	9	5
7	5	9	8	4	3	1	6	2				1	3	4	9	7	5	2	6	8

EASY SUDOKU

1

9	3	2	5	8	4	6	7	1
4	1	5	9	6	7	2	3	8
7	8	6	1	3	2	5	4	9
5	6	8	7	2	9	3	1	4
2	9	3	4	1	6	7	8	5
1	4	7	3	5	8	9	6	2
6	2	1	8	9	3	4	5	7
8	7	9	6	4	5	1	2	3
3	5	4	2	7	1	8	9	6

2

8	9	1	7	3	2	5	4	6
4	6	3	5	8	1	9	7	2
7	2	5	4	9	6	1	3	8
3	1	8	2	7	9	4	6	5
5	7	6	1	4	8	3	2	9
9	4	2	3	6	5	7	8	1
1	8	7	6	5	3	2	9	4
2	3	9	8	1	4	6	5	7
6	5	4	9	2	7	8	1	3

FUTOSHIKI

1

1		2		5	>	4	>	3
∧								
2		4		1		3		5
5	>	3	<	4		2		1
		∨						
3		1		2		5		4
4		5		3		1	<	2

2

5		1		2	<	3		4
3	<	4		5		1		2
∨								
2		3		4		5		1
		∨						∧
1	<	2		3		4		5
				∨				
4	<	5		1		2		3

NUMBERFIT

1

5	2	5	9	5	9	2	2	5
2	6	■	5	2	5	■	■	0
5	6	2	3	2	6	6	■	5
9	■	2	■	5	■	3	5	2
2	9	9	2	■	2	5	5	6
9	5	2	■	2	■	2	■	5
3	■	6	3	9	3	2	6	9
3	■	■	5	9	5	■	6	2
5	2	5	0	5	5	9	2	9

2

■	1	3	7	7	3	3	4	■
1	■	2	2	■	4	2	■	4
4	6	2	■	■	■	2	6	2
5	8	1	9	■	5	1	8	2
5	2	2	1	4	4	5	5	3
2	8	4	5	■	6	4	8	5
2	6	4	■	■	■	5	6	5
4	■	7	4	■	2	5	■	1
■	4	3	3	4	7	7	1	■

KAKURO

1

	8	9		8	9	7			
	2	5		3	5	2	4		
		3	9				7	6	9
	3	1	6	7				5	3
	4	8		2	9		8	4	
			4	1	2	6	5		
		8	2		8	7		7	6
	5	6				8	1	4	2
	7	1	3				7	5	
			6	9	8	5		1	5
				1	9	2		3	8

HARD SUDOKU

1

6	8	4	9	7	2	5	1	3
1	2	5	4	6	3	7	8	9
3	9	7	5	8	1	6	2	4
5	3	1	8	4	6	9	7	2
9	4	2	1	3	7	8	6	5
8	7	6	2	9	5	4	3	1
7	5	8	3	1	4	2	9	6
2	6	3	7	5	9	1	4	8
4	1	9	6	2	8	3	5	7

2

6	2	1	4	5	7	8	9	3
9	3	8	1	2	6	5	4	7
7	4	5	8	9	3	6	1	2
4	7	9	5	3	2	1	6	8
3	5	6	9	1	8	2	7	4
8	1	2	6	7	4	9	3	5
5	6	7	2	4	9	3	8	1
2	8	3	7	6	1	4	5	9
1	9	4	3	8	5	7	2	6

KILLER SUDOKU

1

2	8	5	4	3	6	9	1	7
9	6	3	7	2	1	5	4	8
1	4	7	9	8	5	2	3	6
7	2	1	5	9	4	8	6	3
5	9	6	8	1	3	4	7	2
8	3	4	6	7	2	1	9	5
4	7	2	1	6	8	3	5	9
3	1	9	2	5	7	6	8	4
6	5	8	3	4	9	7	2	1

2

9	2	8	4	7	6	1	3	5
3	4	5	1	9	8	7	2	6
6	1	7	3	5	2	8	9	4
2	8	3	7	4	9	5	6	1
4	5	6	8	1	3	2	7	9
1	7	9	2	6	5	3	4	8
5	3	4	6	8	7	9	1	2
7	9	1	5	2	4	6	8	3
8	6	2	9	3	1	4	5	7

ALPHADOKU

1

V	W	X	T	Y	U	R	S	Z
Y	S	Z	W	V	R	X	T	U
T	R	U	X	S	Z	W	Y	V
S	Z	T	R	U	W	V	X	Y
X	V	R	Y	Z	S	T	U	W
W	U	Y	V	X	T	Z	R	S
R	Y	V	U	W	X	S	Z	T
Z	X	W	S	T	Y	U	V	R
U	T	S	Z	R	V	Y	W	X

2

S	U	V	Y	R	W	Z	X	T
T	X	W	Z	U	V	S	R	Y
R	Z	Y	X	T	S	W	U	V
Y	W	X	U	Z	T	V	S	R
Z	T	R	S	V	Y	U	W	X
U	V	S	R	W	X	T	Y	Z
X	Y	T	V	S	U	R	Z	W
V	S	Z	W	Y	R	X	T	U
W	R	U	T	X	Z	Y	V	S

2

	1	6		3	1	4			
	3	7		5	6	8	7		
		2	5				2	9	8
	3	9	7	4				4	7
	2	4		6	2		9	5	
			4	9	8	5	3		
		3	2		9	1		8	6
	5	6				2	1	6	3
	7	8	6				4	9	
			5	1	4	3		7	5
				6	7	9		4	3

PAGES FOUR AND FIVE:

BIG CROSSWORD 1

Across: 9 Coleslaw, 10 Can, 11 Orally, 12 Citric, 13 Leering, 14 Lost, 15 Boisterous, 17 Identify, 18 Stooped, 19 Aria, 21 Arable, 24 Light middleweight, 27 Random, 29 Heed, 30 Screams, 33 Accustom, 35 Plantation, 36 Grip, 37 Tantrum, 38 Pantry, 40 Stereo, 41 Eel, 42 Chlorine.

Down: 1 Horizontal, 2 Fear, 3 Black eye, 4 Swallow, 5 Anticipated, 6 Congregate, 7 Ballot, 8 Blissful, 10 Chess, 16 Sponged, 20 Ridge, 22 Augment, 23 Right-minded, 25 Temptation, 26 Tambourine, 28 Accurate, 31 Catapult, 32 Hammock, 34 Umpire, 35 Peril, 39 Norm.

BIG CROSSWORD 2

Across: 9 Generally, 10 Tangerine, 12 Week, 13 Scarab, 14 Atelier, 15 Ill-sorted, 17 Overcomes, 18 Escapes, 19 Wander, 20 Yeti, 23 Boulevard, 25 Automaton, 26 Cold, 27 Kisses, 29 Pollute, 32 Godfather, 34 Landslide, 35 Midwife, 36 Tenure, 37 Asia, 38 Operation, 39 Limousine.

Down: 1 Egg white, 2 Intellectual, 3 Placates, 4 Hybrid, 5 Stubborn, 6 Engagement, 7 Defence, 8 Depression, 11 Idiom, 16 Osprey, 19 Wad, 21 Enthusiastic, 22 Smells, 23 Backgammon, 24 Arithmetic, 25 Ass, 28 Scrutiny, 29 Panorama, 30 Elevated, 31 Capital, 33 Dodge, 34 Lonely.

JUMBO CROSSWORD

Across: 12 Turning away; 13 Crease; 14 Ocelot; 16 Else; 17 Perishing; 18 Addle; 19 Toby; 20 Hands down; 22 Sloth; 23 Departure; 27 Portray; 30 Couple; 31 Tier; 32 Tried; 35 Stir; 36 Ran down; 38 Stay; 39 Rumours; 42 Assess; 45 Tunes; 46 Connote; 47 Fair; 48 Pour; 50 Lightly; 52 Screw; 54 Bashed; 56 Section; 57 Plan; 59 Several; 61 Rock; 64 Rolls; 66 Sole; 67 Ticked; 69 Respond; 72 Gets round; 73 Money; 74 Conducted; 79 Stop; 81 Noise; 82 On the spot; 83 Nick; 85 Undone; 86 Hovers; 87 Sticks up for.

Down: 1 Pull; 2 Intend; 3 Sniped; 4 Marrows; 5 Daisy; 6 Brightness; 7 Satan; 8 Dead level; 9 Foresaw; 10 Bent; 11 Forborne; 15 Fillip; 21 About; 24 Turn off; 25 Go down; 26 Strain; 28 Three; 29 Air; 33 On stage; 34 Superb; 37 Nasty; 40 Raise; 41 Forward; 43 Stole; 44 Saloon; 46 Cases; 49 Rattles; 51 Tolled; 53 Review; 55 Scrap; 58 Not to worry; 60 Lie; 62 Canoe; 63 Downright; 65 Overtone; 68 Create; 70 Bounder; 71 Compact; 75 Detest; 76 Canape; 77 Serve; 78 Rests; 80 Poor; 84 Cool.

TWO-SPEED

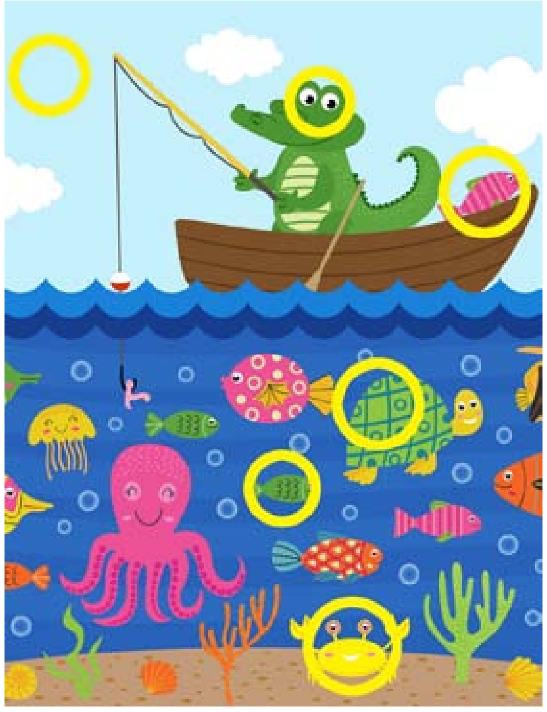
Across: 6 Wreaths; 7 Party; 9 Walls; 10 Log book; 12 Storyteller; 14 Bill sticker; 18 Remarry; 19 Might; 21 Pages; 22 Palmist.

Down: 1 Tread; 2 Tablet; 3 Shy; 4 Barbel; 5 Strokes; 8 Contact; 11 Writers; 13 Literal; 15 Leader; 16 Enigma; 17 Ghost; 20 Man.

NUMBERCRUNCH

Beginner 18
Intermediate 15
Advanced 359

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE



PAGES SIX AND SEVEN:

PATHFINDER

1 Amerigo Vespucci, Christopher Columbus, Marco Polo, David Livingstone, Ernest Shackleton, Ferdinand Magellan, Francis Drake, James Cook, Leif Erikson, Roald Amundsen, Vasco da Gama, Walter Raleigh, Jacques Cartier, Henry Hudson, Hernán Cortés, Ranulph Fiennes, Benedict Allen.

2 Beauty and the Beast, Aladdin, The Lion King, Hercules, Pocahontas, A Bug's Life, Finding Nemo, Brother Bear, The Incredibles, Cars, Ratatouille, Enchanted, Bolt, Brave, The Princess and the Frog, Frankenweenie, Inside Out, Finding Dory, Zootopia, Coco, Moana, Onward, Elemental, Soul, Luca.

GIANT SUDOKU

W	K	8	Q	9	4	R	L	Z	1	T	M	3	U	X	N	S	V	P	O	6	7	5	Y	2
Y	7	1	N	U	3	V	Q	X	6	L	P	R	8	Z	5	T	9	M	2	K	W	O	4	S
L	O	M	R	S	7	5	N	9	2	W	Y	4	V	6	U	X	Q	Z	K	T	3	1	P	8
X	3	P	V	2	Y	T	W	K	8	5	9	7	S	O	L	1	6	R	4	Z	N	Q	M	U
T	5	6	4	Z	P	U	S	M	O	N	Q	1	K	2	W	3	Y	8	7	9	V	L	X	R
M	8	2	5	6	W	S	R	4	3	X	N	L	P	Q	Z	O	1	V	9	7	T	K	U	Y
3	P	Z	S	V	X	2	U	O	T	7	6	9	Y	5	K	L	8	W	Q	4	R	M	1	N
N	Q	W	T	O	L	M	9	7	K	1	2	8	4	U	6	Y	R	3	X	S	5	P	V	Z
4	9	R	Y	L	Q	P	5	1	N	V	T	K	Z	3	S	2	U	7	M	8	6	X	O	W
U	X	K	7	1	8	Y	Z	6	V	O	R	S	M	W	4	N	P	5	T	2	L	3	9	Q
P	Y	5	O	N	9	1	M	2	Z	4	3	Q	W	K	R	6	L	U	V	X	8	S	T	7
2	S	T	X	K	O	W	8	R	4	Z	V	U	7	9	M	P	5	Y	N	Q	1	6	3	L
7	U	L	9	8	K	N	P	Y	Q	M	S	6	T	1	3	Z	2	X	W	5	O	V	R	4
1	Z	3	6	4	V	L	X	U	S	R	O	N	5	P	9	Q	7	T	8	Y	M	2	W	K
V	R	Q	M	W	5	3	6	T	7	2	8	Y	X	L	1	K	4	O	S	N	P	U	Z	9
O	6	7	Z	Q	M	K	3	8	9	P	5	2	L	R	X	V	W	N	1	U	Y	4	S	T
8	V	S	1	X	Z	4	Y	N	U	9	K	T	3	7	Q	R	M	L	6	P	2	W	5	O
K	2	U	3	Y	1	7	V	S	P	6	Z	W	O	N	8	4	T	9	5	L	X	R	Q	M
9	L	N	W	T	R	6	O	5	X	Y	4	M	Q	S	P	U	Z	2	3	1	K	8	7	V
5	M	4	P	R	T	Q	2	L	W	8	U	X	1	V	O	7	K	S	Y	3	9	Z	N	6
6	N	V	L	5	S	9	1	Q	Y	3	7	Z	R	8	2	W	O	4	P	M	U	T	K	X
Z	1	9	2	M	6	O	T	W	L	S	X	V	N	4	7	5	3	K	U	R	Q	Y	8	P
Q	T	X	U	3	2	8	7	P	R	K	W	O	6	M	Y	9	S	1	Z	V	4	N	L	5
R	4	O	8	7	N	Z	K	V	5	U	1	P	2	Y	T	M	X	Q	L	W	S	9	6	3
S	W	Y	K	P	U	X	4	3	M	Q	L	5	9	T	V	8	N	6	R	O	Z	7	2	1

MEDIUM SUDOKU

1

6	7	8	2	1	4	5	9	3
5	9	3	7	8	6	1	2	4
1	4	2	9	3	5	6	7	8
9	1	6	4	2	3	8	5	7
3	8	7	1	5	9	2	4	6
4	2	5	6	7	8	3	1	9
7	5	9	8	6	2	4	3	1
8	3	4	5	9	1	7	6	2
2	6	1	3	4	7	9	8	5

2

9	2	8	3	6	1	7	4	5
7	5	4	8	2	9	1	3	6
1	3	6	7	4	5	2	9	8
2	6	1	5	8	3	4	7	9
8	4	7	9	1	6	5	2	3
5	9	3	2	7	4	6	8	1
3	7	9	1	5	2	8	6	4
4	1	2	6	3	8	9	5	7
6	8	5	4	9	7	3	1	2

VERY HARD SUDOKU

1

3	7	2	8	6	4	5	9	1
9	8	5	7	3	1	4	2	6
6	1	4	9	5	2	7	3	8
5	9	1	4	7	6	2	8	3
2	4	6	5	8	3	1	7	9
8	3	7	2	1	9	6	4	5
1	6	8	3	2	7	9	5	4
7	5	9	6	4	8	3	1	2
4	2	3	1	9	5	8	6	7

2

5	3	9	2	4	1	7	8	6
8	6	2	5	7	3	1	9	4
7	4	1	6	9	8	2	3	5
9	5	3	8	2	4	6	1	7
2	7	4	3	1	6	8	5	9
1	8	6	7	5	9	4	2	3
6	2	5	9	8	7	3	4	1
3	1	8	4	6	5	9	7	2
4	9	7	1	3	2	5	6	8

IMPOSSUDOKU

1

2	7	6	5	9	1	3	4	8
1	5	9	3	8	4	7	6	2
8	3	4	7	6	2	1	5	9
6	4	2	8	5	7	9	3	1
5	1	3	4	2	9	6	8	7
7	9	8	1	3	6	4	2	5
4	8	1	6	7	5	2	9	3
9	6	5	2	1	3	8	7	4
3	2	7	9	4	8	5	1	6

2

1	9	5	6	3	2	7	4	8
6	3	8	7	4	5	9	1	2
4	7	2	9	1	8	3	6	5
9	6	7	2	5	3	1	8	4
2	8	4	1	6	7	5	9	3
5	1	3	4	8	9	6	2	7
8	2	9	5	7	6	4	3	1
3	5	1	8	9	4	2	7	6
7	4	6	3	2	1	8	5	9

CROSS OUT

1

P	R	I	D	E
L		D		N
A	G	E	N	T
N		A		R
T	A	S	T	Y

2

J	O	I	N	T
E		D		U
T	H	E	I	R
T		A		N
Y	E	L	L	S

ARROWWORD

1

	T		P		B		A
	A	S	S		R	O	D
	J	E	A	L	O	U	S
E	M	E	L	I		R	
	A		M	P	H		J
T	H	A	I		U	S	E
	A		S	I	N	K	S
S	L	I	T		K	I	T

2

	W		R		J		Y
M	A	N	I	C	U	R	E
	R	E	M	I	T		A
		P		T	E	A	R
J	E	T	T	Y		T	
	D	U	E		C	O	T
M	A	N	S	I	O	N	S
	M	E	T		P	E	P

WORDSEARCH

1

B	E	M	I	L	H	O	U	S	E
S	M	I	T	H	E	R	S	X	S
Y	T	A	L	R	H	T	N	U	R
T	Q	R	G	L	Z	Q	O	G	E
S	N	L	A	G	I	O	W	T	D
U	O	M	I	B	I	W	B	I	N
R	S	I	A	S	B	E	A	T	A
K	L	S	I	R	A	X	L	C	L
R	E	M	O	H	G	V	L	H	F
B	N	T	N	R	I	E	I	Y	C

2

R	T	E	G	K	N	U	J	L	Z
C	R	U	I	S	E	R	M	B	C
D	T	C	L	I	N	E	R	Y	U
O	I	O	K	G	E	P	R	R	T
Q	O	N	M	R	U	R	E	J	T
P	B	F	G	E	E	G	B	K	E
W	O	H	D	H	G	K	W	B	R
P	T	V	W	U	Y	W	N	G	I
C	G	S	L	X	S	A	R	A	O
D	H	K	W	E	G	R	A	B	T

DAILY EXPRESS

Fever Pitch

express.co.uk/sport

YOUR FOOTBALL WEEKEND STARTS HERE

CUP ROMANCE IS PURE BLISS

Father and son living dream with Weston-super-Mare

– PAGES 2-3

FAMILY AFFAIR Club chairman Oli Bliss and dad Paul with the FA Cup

PALACE IS BIG BUT MACCLESFIELD MINDS ON McLEOD – PAGES 6-7

BOREHAM v BURTON

FA CUP: Third round, KO 3pm

WOOD READY TO GO FOR A BURTON

EXCLUSIVE BY KIERAN KING

BOREHAM WOOD will be looking for an FA Cup shock in the third round today.

But the National League side are not the only ones dreaming of the fourth round as League One Burton Albion come to Meadow Park.

Wood boss Luke Garrard (above) declared his ambition to lead the club out against a Premier League giant once more earlier this week.

Garrard, into his second spell in charge, faced then-Championship side Bournemouth and Everton in the club's best-ever Cup run to the fifth round in the 2021-22 season.

His promotion-chasing side, who are two points off the National League summit with two games in hand, cruised past Newport County 3-0 in the last round.

And they are favourites to topple Burton, despite 29 places separating them in the football pyramid.

But Burton, who are currently in the League One relegation zone, have their own ambitions.

And defender Dylan Williams (inset) believes it's a "good opportunity" for a real run in the world's oldest cup competition.

"We are all really excited," Williams told the Daily Mirror Sport.

"It's a good opportunity to get into the fourth round and hopefully face someone in the Premier League.

"But the task at hand is beating Boreham Wood and getting into the next round."

Burton have only reached the fourth round once in the club's 76-year history when they beat Oxford United, Chesterfield and Middlesbrough before losing to Burnley in 2011.

"It's a great incentive," Williams said about the prospect of becoming Burton's joint-most successful FA Cup team.

"This squad is capable of creating and what we have got is a lot of experience and a lot of young boys that can step up.

"We can't wait to put on a performance and hopefully get through."

GRIMSBY v WESTON

FA Cup: 3rd, KO 5.45pm

WESTON UNION

How a father and son are loving a fairy-tale Cup run and dreaming of glory at Grimsby today

EXCLUSIVE

BY **JOHN CROSS**

WESTON-SUPER-MARE have made themselves one of this season's great FA Cup fairy-tales – at the 84th attempt.

The National League South side will take 600 fans to Grimsby and are dreaming of going one step further in their remarkable run.

Chairman Oli Bliss has finally taken the club into the third round for the first time in the club's proud history.

It has surpassed even his dad, former chairman Paul Bliss, who came within a whisker during his 39 years at the helm after reaching the second round in 2003/04 but losing to Northampton.

The father-and-son double act are enjoying the romance of the FA Cup but know it means everything to non-League clubs like theirs.

Weston-super-Mare, along with Macclesfield, of the National League North, are the lowest ranked teams left in the FA Cup and the semi-pro club's line-up is made up of teachers, sports coaches and labourers.

They have had some support from England star Ollie Watkins – who had a loan spell at Weston-Super-Mare while a young player at Exeter – and is still pals with current players Jacob Cane and Jason Pope. A signed Aston Villa shirt hangs on the wall off the clubhouse (right).

And the clubhouse is really quite something in itself. The Optima Stadium holds 3,500 fans and sits on the outskirts of the seaside town in the South West of England which is a 500-mile round trip to Grimsby.

But this is what the FA Cup is all about. There is such a buzz around the place ahead of this weekend – they even had a visit from the Cup itself – and the extra cash will help them strengthen the squad and push through with their plans to develop a 5,000-seater ground on the existing site.

The chairman reckons they have already banked £200,000. The prize for the winners of this evening's tie is £121,500 and they will get £40,000 in TV money as the game is being shown live on Discovery Plus.

Liverpool fan Oli does not want the run to end. "The third round is such a big stage for non-League clubs," he said. "We came close in 2004 but we were never in the game in the second round. They were too good for us.

"But we always knew we had a chance against Chelmsford in the second round this time and we feel we'll be in with a chance against Grimsby on Saturday. We'll go there believing we can do it." He says he fully intends to give the players a bonus if they can land an FA Cup upset against Grimsby, who have already caused a huge story themselves this season by knocking out Manchester United in the League Cup.

"We had a bonus structure – but I never expected to get this far so I'll have to think of something else!" he said.

"The players have already had a trip away to Liverpool, a night out on the town and they all went dressed as Minions! I don't know what they'll do this time."

The romance is there for Weston-super-Mare. But the FA Cup is also a lifeblood for non-League clubs.

It drives interest in the club and allows them to dream. It is huge for the whole football pyramid.

Oli said: "It's so important because it affects the budget so much. It gives the fans a great day out and it can affect the season in the league as wel,l which is what it's done for us. Crowds have increased a lot in non-League and there's such a buzz around non-League football. The FA Cup is a big part of that.

"It's huge for us. We're trying to improve the squad, build a new ground and we only budget for two cup wins so the first round proper, second round and now this is a real bonus.

"If we're able to keep going in the cup, we can put it into the development with 97 apartments, a new clubhouse, a whole new ground – other than the pitch and the big stand at the end.

"Even before the game on Saturday, we're already touching on about £200,000 which helps us keep pushing in the league – second at the moment – and it's also huge for the fans."

They are already dreaming about who they could get if they get through.

"My dad's a Man United fan, but I'm Liverpool and so we'll take either one of them," said Oli. "In fact, any away day in the Premier League would be fantastic. But, please, away from home! It will mean so much to us financially."

PITCH PERFECT

But Weston have huge plans for their stadium on the edge of town

WE'RE SO CLOSE

Weston chairman Oli Bliss and dad and ex-chairman Paul with the FA Cup when it paid a visit to their ground

WESTON-SUPER-MARE have battled their way to the FA Cup third round for the first time in their 139-year history.

The National League South side have seen off all-comers across five rounds and six ties, including dumping out National League Aldershot Town.

But their third-round showdown with League Two Grimsby will be their first clash against Football League opposition in the competition this season.

HERE'S HOW THEY GOT TO THE THIRD ROUND:

Dec 6 - Second round - **Chelmsford City** (A) - **0-2**
Nov 1 - First round - **Aldershot Town** (H) - **2-1**
Oct 11 - 4QR - **Needham Market** (H) - **1-0**
Sept 27 - 3QR - **Poole Town** (A) - **0-2**
Sept 16 - 2QR replay - **Taunton Town** (H) - **3-0**
Sept 13 - 2QR - **Taunton Town** (A) - **1-1**

IT'S GRIMSBY'S TURN TO BE THE 'GIANTS'

JAZE KABIA is determined the boot won't be on the other foot for giant-killing Grimsby.

The Mariners hit the headlines in August after dumping Manchester United out of the Carabao Cup.

Their run to the last 16 also saw them beat Sheffield Wednesday before bowing out to Brentford.

It's a role reversal for the League Two play-off hopefuls as they go head-to-head for a place in round four with Weston-super-Mare – who the Republic of Ireland-born striker faced when turning out for Truro last season in National League South.

Grimsby's 10-goal top scorer has made the most of his chance since stepping up two divisions in the summer, and hopes to help the Mariners emulate their march to the last eight of the FA Cup three years ago. The 25-year-old (inset) said:

"We've worked extremely hard to turn things around after a little blip to get back to how we were earlier on in the season to combine performances and results.

"We've continued to play some really good football so we should expect things to turn out better for us moving forward because I certainly do. The sky's the limit. Hopefully with the team looking back to our old selves that will mean more chances for me.

"I don't see why I shouldn't aim for 20 goals this season when I have the quality that I do around me on the pitch. I always back myself to finish chances when I get the ball in front of goal.

"I've scored some big goals and been a part of some big games already here in the cup.

"We've faced two Premier League teams so it's been beyond my wildest expectations."

ODDS AND NODS

William HILL

BY **LEE PHELPS**
William Hill spokesperson

WHATEVER you think of the FA Cup these days, the third round is still one of the iconic days in the football calendar.

It's a great day for an accumulator and remember four or more picks activate your Acca Boost. There are six Epic Boosts across the rest of the ties too, check them out on the William Hill app or in our shops.

We all want a 'giant-killing' bet and I've picked out a few possibles.

Three to look at are Blackpool at Ipswich, if the Championship side think chasing down Coventry is more important than a cup run. Shrewsbury are at Wolves at a big price, but Rob Edwards' team have nothing else to play for!

Weston-Super-Mare are one of the lowest ranked teams and have League Two Grimsby, who are beatable at a big price.

One of the ties of the round is Tottenham against Aston Villa and both should be targeting the FA Cup as a No. 1 priority this season.

You've got to fancy Villa to win it at the prices and I like a Bet Builder here too.

Spurs are in a bit of a mess and Villa have already won at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium this season. Over two and a half goals have landed in six of the last seven meetings and Spurs are poor at the back.

Ollie Watkins (below) has four goals in his last four games, but we'll play it safe and stick with Villa's talisman for a shot on target.

Impact Sub applies on the Bet Builder too, as well as getting a 25% boost if you land it.

ADVERTORIAL

FACING A BATTLE Farke has to guard against a surprise tomorrow

I SPY AN OLD RIVALRY

PACKING A PUNCH Eustace has a strong record in matches against Farke

Eustace on a mission to cause upset

DERBY COUNTY v LEEDS UNITED

FA Cup: KO 12pm tomorrow

BY **LEIGH CURTIS**

JOHN EUSTACE says the Spygate affair between Derby and Leeds is buried firmly in the past as they prepare to renew their rivalry in the FA Cup at lunchtime tomorrow.

The two clubs face each other in what is set to be another fiery atmosphere at Pride Park for the third-round clash.

Leeds hit the headlines in 2019 when then-boss Marcelo Bielsa sent a member of staff to spy on Derby's training session, only to be caught in the act.

Bielsa (right) then admitted he had masterminded the operation to watch Derby train, but felt he had done nothing wrong.

Leeds apologised but it generated a spiky rivalry between the two clubs and certainly has not been forgotten by the fans.

But speaking ahead of the game, Derby head coach Eustace said: "Everyone can see what happened and it was before I was in charge.

"It was a long time ago and I'm not too worried about that now. But I've sent my spies over there to watch them train this week and we got nowhere!"

He added: "In all seriousness, Derby obviously got some great results against them, but the past is the past.

"All I'm worried about is my squad and us as a club and we're really looking forward to playing against a really difficult opponent."

Eustace will once again be reunited in battle against Daniel Farke, with Derby's head coach boasting an impressive record over the German.

In five meetings, Eustace has overseen three victories, one draw and just one defeat during their meetings in the Championship.

But with Leeds boasting a squad full of exciting talent and with Farke having led them to the Premier League, Eustace maintained that it will be a totally different game compared to when he faced Farke's teams previously.

When asked about his impressive record against Farke, a smiling Eustace said: "I wish you hadn't said that to be fair. Daniel's a top, top coach and his record over the years has been sensational.

"I'm pleased he's doing well now in the Premier League as well and this is a completely different game.

"It's a new game. We're playing against Premier League players now, not players in the Championship.

"It's going to be a really tough task. I've got so much respect for Daniel and what he's done and now he's taken Leeds into the top flight.

"He's managing a top club there, and he's doing a great job.

"You look at the squad of players that he has and the squad is an exceptional one.

"He had a great squad at his previous club, as well as before that, at Norwich, too.

"He's a great coach, and he can get the best out of some really good players.

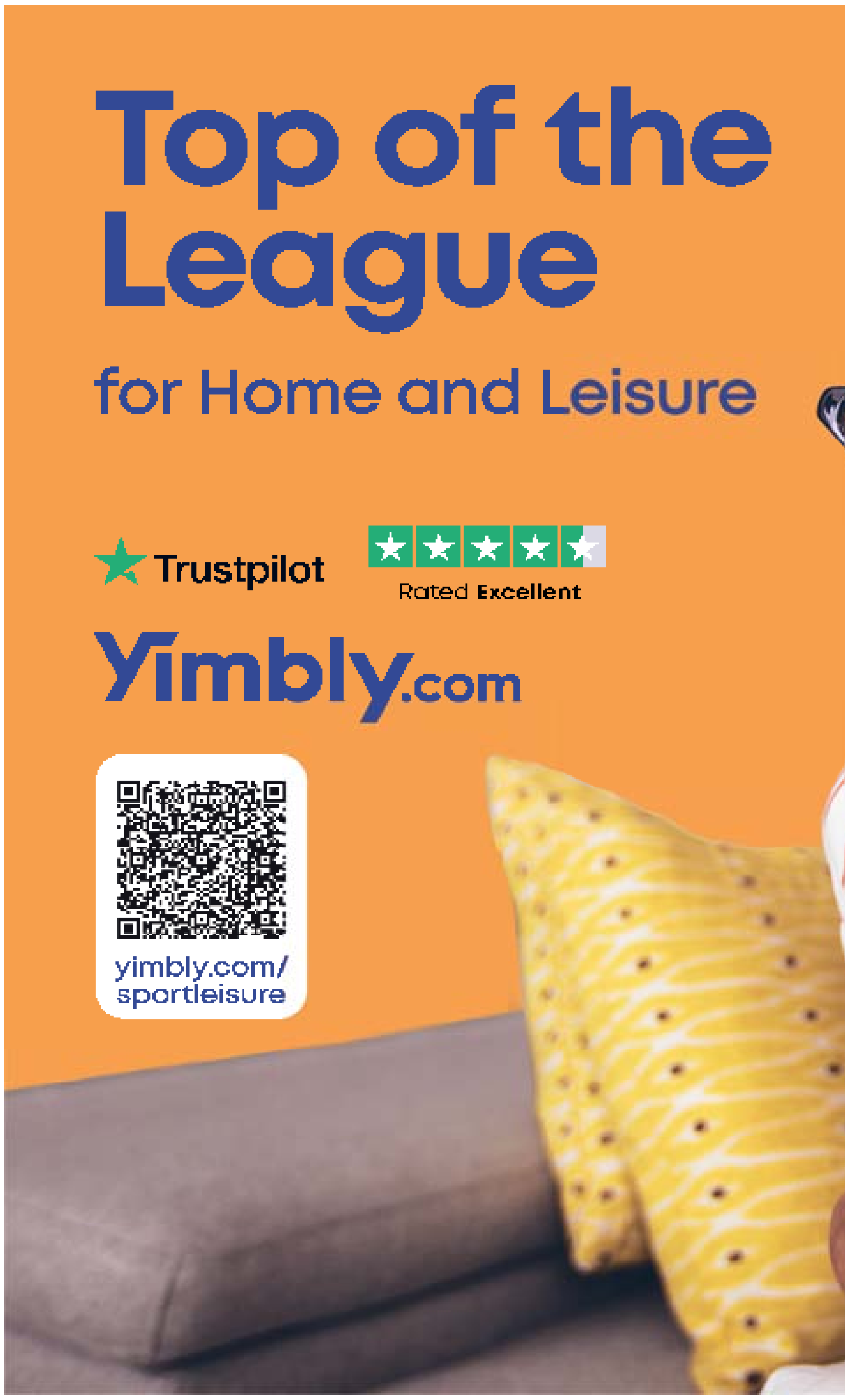
"We did well against him over the last couple of seasons, but this is a completely different test on Sunday."

THE FRICTION - A HISTORY LESSON

Clough's 'Damned' reign (July - September 1974)
Legendary Derby manager Brian Clough left Brighton to replace Don Revie at old rivals Leeds - both of whom he had heavily criticised - but his ill-fated reign lasted just 44 days, inspired the book and film 'The Damned United'.

Lee v Hunter (November 1, 1975)
The most infamous incident in the clubs' fierce rivalry as Derby's Francis Lee and Leeds' Norman Hunter came to blows in a shocking fist fight on the pitch which left the former with four stitches.

'Spygate' (January 2019)
Leeds were fined £200,000 after head coach Marcelo Bielsa admitted spying on Derby ahead of their Championship fixture when a staff member was spotted outside the training ground, before they were ultimately knocked out of the play-offs by Frank Lampard's Rams.



Top of the League

for Home and Leisure

Trustpilot ★★★★★ Rated Excellent

Yimbly.com

yimbly.com/sportleisure

Lloyd hunts Wolves

Wolves v Shrewsbury
FA Cup: KO 12.15pm

BY **JASON MELLOR**

GEORGE LLOYD was nine minutes away from one of the FA Cup's most seismic shocks after giving Manchester City the cold shoulder.

Now the Shrewsbury striker is relishing his latest crack at another Premier League big boy as Town bid to pile the misery on Wolves.

The 25-year-old (right) was in the Cheltenham team that led City until late on in their fourth-round clash five years ago, before Pep Guardiola's side broke Town's hearts to win 3-1.

The League Two strugglers will be backed by 3,000 Shrews fans for the short trip to the Premier League's bottom club as they look to progress to round four for the first time in six years.

Lloyd, who has three goals this season, said: "As soon as someone mentions the FA Cup, that City game is always the first thing that comes into my head.

"It'd be nice to get another big cup tie in there that I can say I've played in – or even to beat one of the big boys. The City game was such a memorable one.

"It was weird because it was during Covid so there were no fans. It still felt like a massive occasion but there was no atmosphere.

"We went a goal in front and in the build-up the ball came off my shoulder so somehow I was credited with the assist. City had a lot of big names playing and they brought on some big boys from the bench.

"They were different class but we pushed them right to the end and hopefully we can do that again."

CLUB POLICY
Pedersen's prep was hit by insurance issues, on top of injury to Iorfa (inset)

PEDERSEN'S PITCH BATTLE

Training's a liability for wounded Owls

SHEFFIELD WED v BRENTFORD
FA Cup: KO 3pm

BY **JASON MELLOR**

ONE manager can be forgiven for dreaming about potential European opponents while the other has to go over the smallprint to check his players are insured to turn out on a plastic pitch.

It is not that long since Sheffield Wednesday and Brentford regularly crossed swords in the Championship.

But it's a stark indication of the diverging fortunes of the FA Cup opponents that anything other than a thumping victory for Keith Andrews' side at Hillsborough would be a major shock.

The sides met in the second tier for seven consecutive seasons before the Bees' promotion to the Premier League in 2021.

Brentford have continued their impressive upward trajectory to sit fifth in the top flight.

Wednesday, bottom of the Championship 32 points from safety, are heading for League One as they pick up the pieces from the Dejphon Chansiri era.

Brighter times could be around the corner in the form of imminent new owners, but for now the short-term pain continues. A threadbare squad is not so much down to the bare bones as the marrow itself.

The Owls and their hefty points deductions take a welcome break from the unremitting slog of their 19-game winless league run to see if a competition they have won three times brings some light relief.

The answer is probably no, but manager Henrik Pedersen has remained stoically positive, even when the Owls boss recounts the kind of taxing daily issues which his counterparts in the Premier League couldn't imagine.

The Dane said: "The training pitches have been frozen, so we were on the artificial pitch but some players are not allowed to play on there because of insurance."

Experienced defender Dominic Iorfa, one of just three senior players in the starting line-up for the defeat by QPR last weekend, has been sidelined until the end of February with a groin problem. Pedersen added: "There's not really anybody close to returning so now we have a smaller squad than we did for QPR."

Andrews loves the cup – even if romance has been in short supply, with the Bees knocked out at this stage in the past three seasons.

Brentford's impressive 3-0 home win over Sunderland in midweek leaves them six unbeaten and dreaming of rubbing shoulders with Europe's elite next season.

Andrews (below) insists he won't take Wednesday lightly despite their troubles and the Irishman said: "We took the League Cup really seriously, where we got to the quarter-finals.

"We'll take the same approach towards the FA Cup because it's a competition I have a lot of love for."

Dango Ouattara has been given extra time to recover after his AFCON exploits with Burkina Faso but Romelle Donovan and on-loan Arsenal forward Reiss Nelson are pushing to start.

MORRISON CAN BAGG AWAY WIN

SWANSEA v WBA

FA Cup 3rd Rnd: Tomorrow, KO 2.30pm

JAMES MORRISON insists full focus is on getting to the fourth round – despite the chaos at West Brom.

Boss Ryan Mason was sacked in midweek with the Baggies having lost 10 away games in a row.

They sit 18th in the Championship and hope to make an appointment before next Friday's visit of Middlesbrough.

Morrison (above) will take charge in South Wales tomorrow and is looking to improve the mood.

"The lads have been fighting and they've been scrapping and our main focus is trying to find a win away from home on Sunday," he said.

"After a win, the feeling always changes. Hopefully we can get one down at Swansea and that can kick-start momentum for us moving into the second part of the season.

"We only played Swansea two weeks ago, so we know what type of test to expect.

"We played them at the end of November, too, so we know a lot about them and the way their manager wants them to play.

"We're all determined to try our best to get through to the next round."

Head coach Vitor Matos has suggested Swansea are keeping tabs on in-demand Jesurun Rak-Sakyi this month.

The winger, 23, has been heavily linked with a loan move to the club along with a number of other Championship sides.

Rak-Sakyi looks set to be recalled by Crystal Palace having scored four goals in 13 games on loan at Turkish side Caykun Rizespor.

Matos said: "Rak-Sakyi is a good player. He had an impact last season with Sheffield United and with Charlton before as well.

"He's someone really interesting. He's one of the names that we keep seeing and monitoring."

ETHAN'S SMILE ...HE SHOULD

Macc dedicate giant-killing bid to tragic team-mate

MACCLESFIELD v CRYSTAL PALACE

FA Cup Third Round: KO 12.15pm

BY **IAN PARKER**

MACCLESFIELD will enjoy one of the biggest occasions in the club's history this afternoon when the National League North side host FA Cup holders Crystal Palace.

But for the Silkmen, the day will be about more than football.

The club is still coming to terms with the death of Ethan McLeod (above), their 21-year-old forward killed in a crash while travelling home from their game at Bedford Town on December 16.

"It's going to be hard," said attacking midfielder Luke Duffy (below). "Ethan should be there with us."

McLeod joined Macclesfield in July after coming through Wolves' academy. He scored three goals in seven appearances for the Silkmen and had quickly become a popular team-mate.

"He just had a big smile that lit up the room," added Duffy.

"He was always laughing, very caring. The smile is what I remember him for, being happy and having a laugh."

McLeod had travelled back separately from his team-mates. As they sat in a long tailback on the M1, they had no idea he had been involved in the crash and did not learn of his death until the following day when boss John Rooney called each player individually.

Duffy said: "All the players went to the club. It was just horrendous. The lads were just sitting there. You can't get your head around things like that.

"You're playing things back where you're with him. It's hard to even speak about."

Days after McLeod's death, the club suffered another tragedy when women's first-team player Winnie Mayele lost her battle with cancer, aged only 19.

The match will be broadcast live at home and abroad and Duffy said: "I think it's a good occasion to remember them.

"It'll be a massive occasion for the club, the fans, to give everyone a little bit of happiness – it's been an horrendous time."

Macclesfield could not have wished for a better fixture in which to do it.

"It's the magic of the FA Cup, isn't it?" he added.

"When you start in the qualifying rounds, this is the occasion you look forward to."

Duffy had a trial with the Eagles as a teenager after a stand-out performance for Lower Breck against Salford caught their eye. "It was an eye-opener," he said. "You see the standards you need to get to at that level.

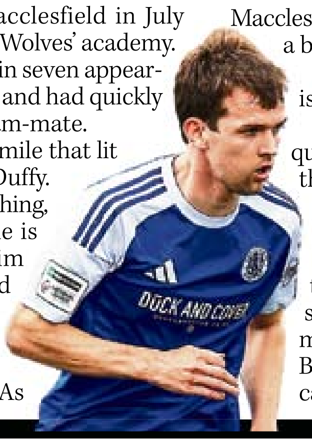
"We were training next to the first team, so you were seeing players like Wilfried Zaha. It was an incredible experience."

Duffy returned to Lower Breck, then helped Warrington Town earn promotion from the Northern Premier Division before joining Macclesfield.

The club reformed in October 2020 after Macclesfield Town were wound up in the High Court, swiftly earning three promotions.

"We want to showcase the club," said Duffy. "We didn't have a football club a few years back. It's testament to the owners, the fans, everyone involved.

"This tells everyone that Macclesfield are back."



HUGE LOSS Ethan McLeod was robbed of a bright future with Macc

CHELTENHAM v LEICESTER

FA Cup Third Round: KO 12.15pm

COTTERILL FORCED TO PLAY A GUESSING GAME

STEVE COTTERILL admits he has not got a clue what kind of team Leicester will put out against his Cheltenham side.

But the Robins chief (left) insists his opposite number Marti Cifuentes has such an embarrassment of riches that he could field three different starting line-ups as the Foxes look to avoid an FA Cup banana skin.

The League Two side will be roared on by a full-house crowd of more than 7,000 as they look to make it into the fourth round for only the third time since 2002.

Cotterill turned down a chance to manager Leicester 20 years ago and the Town boss said: "We will have to approach this game slightly differently and adjust a couple of things.

"It depends which team Leicester want to pick. We've looked at both of them and they're good teams.

"The one thing we haven't got is an idea what their starting line-up is going to look like – that's the problem we have going into the game.

"In fact, they could probably pick three teams, but thankfully we'll only have to play against one of them.

"To have a chance of winning, we're going to have to play really well and they're going to have to have an off day. We know we're going to need a bit of luck.

"I've been here when there have only been a few hundred in the crowd, so for us to have 7,000 here is another great occasion for the club and we're going to try to be the best version of ourselves."

After a poor first half to the Championship campaign, under-pressure Cifuentes is keen to offload a number of players this month.

The Foxes manager said: "I want to make sure everyone is 100 per cent committed to playing for the club."

LIT UP THE ROOM BE HERE WITH US

EXCLUSIVE

BY **JOHN CROSS**

LABOUR OF LOVE AS WARD DOCUMENTS MAGIC OF CUP

JOEL WARD has become something of a TV star on the back of his "whirlwind" Wembley fairy tale.

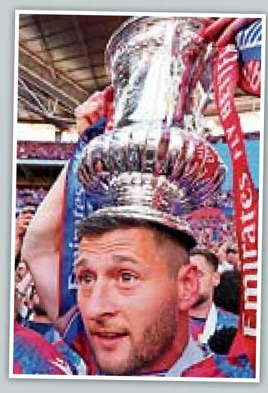
Former Crystal Palace captain Ward helped lift the FA Cup last year as they upset Pep Guardiola's mighty Manchester City.

Ward, who has signed for Swansea as a free agent, has done punditry for TNT Sports through Palace's Europa Conference League run and now the broadcaster has also made a brilliant new documentary on the magic of the FA Cup.

'FA Cup: The People's Story' features Palace's heroics, Everton's 1966 win, Sunderland's 1973 win over Leeds, the 1989 final and also the 2015 women's final, which was the first to be played at Wembley.

But it digs deeper with some powerful social commentary and just what it meant to Palace and South London to win their first-ever trophy.

Ward, 36, can reflect about that day at the end of his 13 years at Palace and even though he was just on the bench, how they made him such a special part of the whole occasion. It was Eagles boss Oliver Glasner and club captain Marc Guehi – who Ward (inset) describes as a "role model and remarkable individual" – who championed the whole idea of honouring the club legend.



Talking about the documentary, Ward said: "It was nice to relive it because the whole time was a bit of a whirlwind. When you roll the tape back, all the memories and emotions come flooding back.

"It was brilliant to reflect and relive some of the moments. The feeling around the club, the journey everyone went on – including the fans – was just electric.

"It definitely doesn't get any better. The whole emotion of having my daughter born two days before the final and knowing my time at Palace was coming to an end was emotional and having my son walk out as one of the mascots."

Ward regards last year's final as a classic. The colour, the fans and the cup upset.

"It had a little bit of everything," he added. "Moments where you had your head in your hands, gasping, and then also times when you were jumping off your seat. There were so many different waves of emotion in the game.

"The whole football community looks forward to these rounds, these games and everyone respects the journey that clubs have been on with the stories which get told."

It is also the first of a four-year deal for TNT's coverage, with 22 live games shown from the third round and TNT and discovery+ showing a total of more than 50 games this season.

TNT will also have an FA Cup first as there will be a Goals Show this afternoon with Matt Smith, Steve McManaman and Fara Williams.

■ TNT Sports is the new Home of the Emirates FA Cup. Watch 22 matches from the Third Round this weekend live on TNT Sports and discovery+.

■ 'FA Cup: The People's Story' will be broadcast at 10.30pm tonight on TNT Sports 1 and available on-demand via discovery+.

ONE A STEP AT A TIME FOR OLIVER

CRYSTAL PALACE boss Oliver Glasner insists his side are not looking past Macclesfield and the non-League club's "match of the decade" today.

The Austrian said: "We want to win another trophy.

"This is our approach. It is not defending something, it is winning something. We are just talking about Macclesfield, about the game and winning it, then take it game by game.

"I always say, 'Don't make the second step before the first one'.

"(Played on) Astro and (against a) non-League football (team), maybe it is their match of the decade, so this is what we have to accept. But on the other side, it is clear – it depends on us and our attitude. If we show our standards, we will win."

Glasner revealed France striker Jean-Philippe Mateta will be rested as the holders look to manage "some issues with his knee".

DONCASTER v SOUTHAMPTON

FA Cup Third Round: KO 3pm

McCANN HAS EYE ON THE ELEMENTS

BY **JASON MELLOR**

WEATHER-WATCHER Grant McCann reckons Southampton might not be the only thing Doncaster have to beat to pull off a cup shock.

The League One strugglers hope to park their nightmare form to upset the Championship side to reach round four for the second season running.

To do that, their pitch must first beat the weather as plummeting temperatures threaten to leave the tie in the balance. Rovers have moved training away from the Eco Power Stadium they share with the town's rugby team to give the playing surface every chance to be ready for today.

It is 14 years since Rovers last beat Saints, when the sides met in the Championship, and boss McCann (left) said: "The groundsmen are trying everything they can.

"We trained on the stadium pitch on Wednesday, or on half of it, anyway.

"It was trainable but it was a little bit hard. On Thursday we left it and trained on the 4G at the stadium. There has been snow and stuff like that forecast.

"I don't think anyone wants a backlog of games, particularly now that rugby has started as well on our pitch, so we'd love the game on and we'll try everything we can."

After six games without a win, Saints boss Tonda Eckert said: "We have big ambitions as a club and we know that we need to make sure the results come quickly."

Emirates FA CUP ROUND-UP

EVATT TO TURN THE TABLES ON TRACTOR BOYS

BY **JASON MELLOR**

IAN EVATT piled the pressure on IPSWICH as BLACKPOOL bid to make it to round four for the third time in six years.

The League One strugglers are big underdogs away to Kieran McKenna's Premier League hopefuls after beating National League duo Scunthorpe and Carlisle to make it this far.

The 1953 Wembley winners were unbeaten in the league in December but have started the new year with back-to-back defeats.

Boss Evatt (above) said: "It's a bit like how we felt against Carlisle and Scunthorpe, where we had all the pressure.

"Now Ipswich have got all the pressure and we've got none. We can attack the game with no fear.

"We've got a lot of fans travelling down to support us and hopefully we cause an upset."

COVENTRY go to STOKE looking to repeat the 1-0 victory at their promotion rivals in November.

BRISTOL CITY and WATFORD and HULL and BLACKBURN meet in other all-Championship ties.

BIRMINGHAM'S woeful away form puts them at risk of a shock at League Two CAMBRIDGE, who are unbeaten at home for more than four months.

Chris Davies' mid-table Championship side have won just once in the last 12 away.

WALSALL will have to beat NORWICH for the first time in almost 25 years to progress at Carrow Road tomorrow.

Nigel Clough led SHEFFIELD UNITED to an FA Cup semi-final in 2014 but the MANSFIELD boss will look to plot his old club's downfall on his latest return to Bramall Lane.

The 59-year-old admits he was baffled by the Blades' decision to sack Chris Wilder in the summer.

Clough's opposite number was reinstated four months ago and the Stags boss said: "There are a lot of good people at the club and I'm looking forward to seeing them.

"I'm delighted Chris is back in charge. It was one of the strangest decisions in football, to sack him. I don't think there has ever been a more volatile time in the game than at the moment."

SALFORD and SWINDON were due to contest a place in round four but the match was postponed yesterday due to a frozen pitch.

The promotion rivals meet in League Two next Saturday when City will visit the County Ground.

LET'S GIVE EM ‘HELL

Boss Kim eager to measure Boro's top-flight credentials

UP FOR THE CUP
Boro's Swedish boss is excited at getting a taste of FA Cup adventure

FULHAM v MIDDLESBROUGH

FA Cup: Third round, KO 3pm

BY **CRAIG JOHNS**

KIM HELLBERG claims his promotion-chasing Middlesbrough side can use today's trip to Fulham as a marker for their Premier League ambitions.

Boro sit second in the Championship but head to Craven Cottage with a number of important players absent through injury.

It means many have questioned if Boro should prioritise the league and rest key players for the cup.

But Hellberg instead sees the game as a great opportunity to learn about themselves ahead of hopefully challenging teams like the Cottagers more regularly next season.

Hellberg said: "It's a little bit different maybe, because it's more about, for us, to see how good we are in the way we want to play. How can we do against that good of a team, playing the way we want to play?

"I think that's been very, very clear in the last nine games, as the team that has the ball most in the Championship, the team that's created most xG (expected goals) from open play in the Championship, the team that has been getting to the final third most in the Championship.

"We're a team that's been playing very good offensive football and that's what we're going there to try to do. Then, if we're good enough to do it, we will see in how many minutes we can handle it.

"We are preparing to be offensive – how we're going to solve them, how we're going to hurt them. And then we'll see. It's also a good game to analyse after and see what we need to do to improve even more.

"It's a feeling where you can just look to keep improving what we're doing, and be brave in that, and also go and try to challenge them."

Having watched English football for years from Sweden and dreaming of one day managing in the FA Cup, the Boro head coach (with Callum Brittain, left) admits it will be a special occasion for him.

"In Sweden there's such a big interest in English football," he said. "It will be special to take part in this cup.

Going to play a Premier League team, going into the cup, and then, of course, first experience the FA Cup.

"Everything about this game... I just want it to be Saturday!"

SILVA: WE WILL BE FULLY SWITCHED ON

WARY Marco Silva knows Middlesbrough will be desperate to show they are a Premier League side in waiting.

Despite losing manager Rob Edwards to Wolves, Boro are second in the championship, six points behind leaders Coventry.

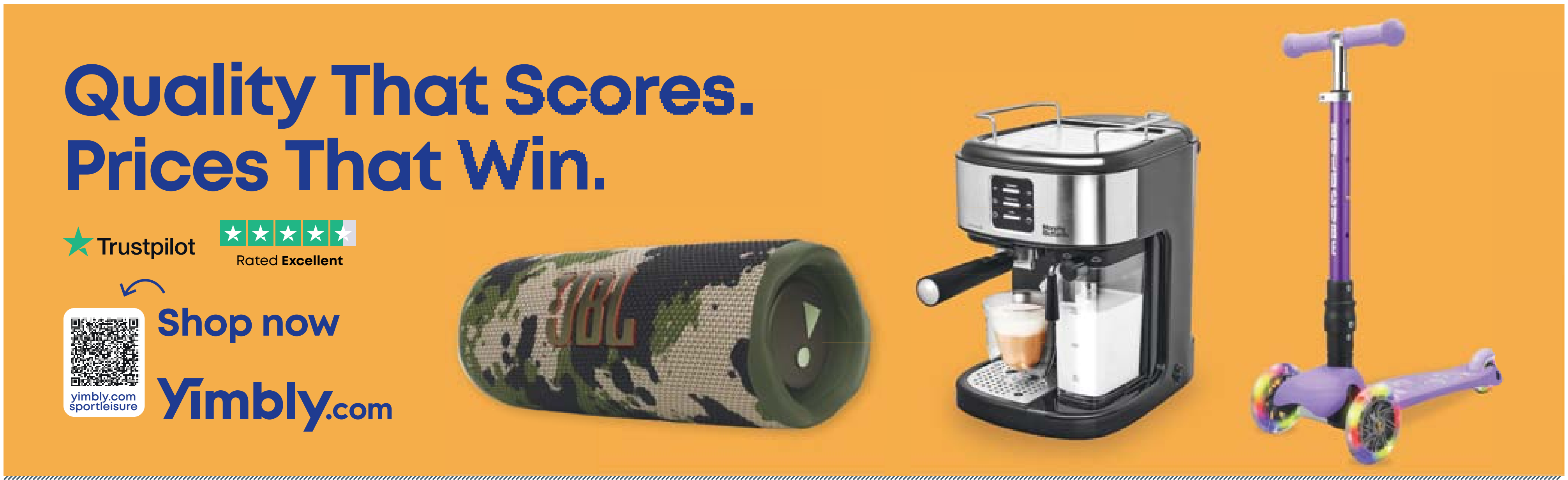
They have tasted victory in just one of their last five matches and Fulham – fresh from their 2-1 win against Chelsea – will be the favourites to progress.

Yet Silva (left) warned: "They are very competitive. They are not in that position and fighting for the first two spots in the Championship by luck or coincidence.

"They are there because they have been very consistent in terms of performance, even with the change in manager, they kept the same results and consistency in that league that is so tough.

"It's a chance for them to show against a Premier League side – in a competition that is very important for us, but is important for them – that they are capable.

"They can create a lot of problems for us, I don't have doubts about it. But we are going to be ready."



Quality That Scores.
Prices That Win.

Trustpilot ★★★★★ Rated Excellent

Shop now

yimbly.com sportleisure

Yimbly.com